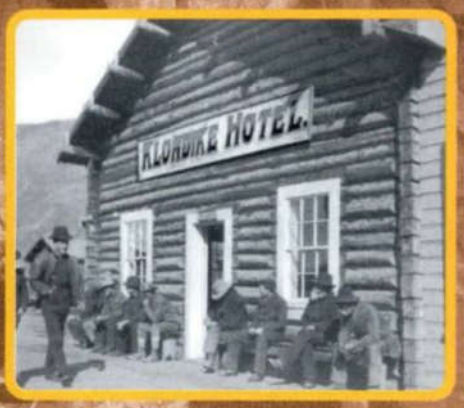
October / November 1997 $ 4.95

The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

- Photo Nuggets: Early Photographers
- The VON in the Klondike
- A Lady in the Gold Fields



HISTORY TELEVISION

Premiering October 17, 1997

FALL SCHEDULE

EASTERN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8:00 AM	SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN					timeCHASE	CENTURY OF WARFARE
8:30 AM	CENTURY OF WARFARE					IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY	
9:00 AM						OLYMPICA	CENTURY OF WARFARE
9:30 AM	OLYMPICA					SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN	
10:00 AM	timeCHASE					HISTORY PRESENTS	CENTURY OF WARFARE
10:30 AM	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY						
11:00 AM	ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS	TIMELINES	THE WAY WE WERE	SENSE OF HISTORY	FRONT PAGE CHALLENGE		CENTURY OF WARFARE
11:30 AM			GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS		
12:00 PM	HISTORY PRESENTS	WAR STORIES	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM		CENTURY OF WARFARE
12:30 PM							
1:00 PM		SECRETS OF WWII				COMBAT	HISTORY ON FILM
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM		HISTORY DOCUMENTARY				WISH ME LUCK	
2:30 PM			THE WAY WE WERE	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY			
3:00 PM	COLDITZ	T.B.A.	SECRET ARMY	COMBAT	WISH ME LUCK	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	
3:30 PM						OLYMPICA	HISTORY ON FILM
4:00 PM	SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN					timeCHASE	
4:30 PM	CENTURY OF WARFARE					IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY	
5:00 PM						T.B.A.	
5:30 PM	OLYMPICA						
6:00 PM	timeCHASE					FRONT PAGE CHALLENGE	TIMELINES
6:30 PM	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY					OLYMPICA	
7:00 PM	ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS	TIMELINES	THE WAY WE WERE	SENSE OF HISTORY	FRONT PAGE CHALLENGE	HISTORY DOCUMENTARY	WAR STORIES
7:30 PM			GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS		
8:00 PM	HISTORY PRESENTS	WAR STORIES	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY DOCUMENTARY
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM		SECRETS OF WWII					HISTORY DOCUMENTARY
9:30 PM							
10:00 PM		HISTORY DOCUMENTARY					SECRETS OF WWII
10:30 PM			THE WAY WE WERE	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY			
11:00 PM	COLDITZ	T.B.A.	SECRET ARMY	COMBAT	WISH ME LUCK	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS
11:30 PM						timeCHASE	OLYMPICA
12:00 AM	HISTORY PRESENTS	WAR STORIES	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY DOCUMENTARY
12:30 AM							
1:00 AM		SECRETS OF WWII					HISTORY DOCUMENTARY
1:30 AM							
2:00 AM		HISTORY DOCUMENTARY					SECRETS OF WWII
2:30 AM			GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS			
3:00 AM	ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS	TIMELINES	THE WAY WE WERE	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY	GREAT CRIMES & TRIALS	COLDITZ	WAR STORIES
3:30 AM			IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY	OLYMPICA	FRONT PAGE CHALLENGE		
4:00 AM	COLDITZ	T.B.A.	SECRET ARMY	COMBAT	WISH ME LUCK	HISTORY ON FILM	TIMELINES
4:30 AM							
5:00 AM	CENTURY OF WARFARE						SENSE OF HISTORY
5:30 AM							HISTORY ON FILM
6:00 AM	OLYMPICA						
6:30 AM	SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN						
7:00 AM	timeCHASE					SECRET ARMY	
7:30 AM	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY						

Program changes may occur.

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Robert Coutts

Visions of Gold

I wanted the gold, and I sought it;
I scrabbled and mucked like a slave.
Was it famine or scurvy – I fought it;
I hurled my youth into a grave.
I wanted the gold and I got it –
Came out with a fortune last fall, –
Yet somehow life's not what I thought it,
And somehow the gold isn't all.

The Collected Poems of Robert Service, 1907

The opening lines of Robert Service's *The Spell of the Yukon*, like a number of his other poems, are familiar to many Canadians, etched in their memory from long-distant schooldays. They conjure up images of gold-hungry miners, dance hall girls, gamblers and desperadoes, and convey the rich mythology that surrounds the history of the Klondike Gold Rush.

The discovery of gold in the late summer of 1896 on Rabbit (later Bonanza) Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River in the Yukon, was to trigger a rush for riches unparalleled in North American history. Over the next half-decade thousands of fortune seekers, mostly Americans as it turned out, would brave rugged mountain passes and icy cold rivers on their way to stake claims in the frozen mud of the northern gold fields. It was a mass migration seldom seen in modern times and one that changed forever the history of the Yukon, and parts of western Canada, as many communities from Winnipeg westward were permanently affected by the boom. This year marks the centennial, not of the actual discovery of gold on the Klondike, but of the real beginning of the Gold Rush when almost overnight the newly created town of Dawson City became the largest community west of Winnipeg and north of San Francisco.

It was on the evening of 16 August 1896 that George Carmack, Tagish Charley and Skookum Jim discovered the rich deposits of gold near the *Throndiuck*, or "Klondike" River, as the miners mispronounced it, that would lead to one of the greatest gold rushes in history. News of their strike did not reach the outside world until July of 1897 with the docking at San Francisco of the steamer *Excelsior*. Fresh from the Yukon gold fields, jubilant prospectors staggered down the gangplank lugging suitcases heavy with gold nuggets. Of varied backgrounds and nationalities they had two things in common: all had been poor and all were now rich. Word of the Klondike strike, announced in bold newspaper headlines, soon attracted fortune seekers, adventurers, gamblers, hustlers and camp followers to the Yukon from the four corners of the world. In the mad rush for gold, claims were quickly staked in the once quiet Yukon hills and along the bubbling creeks – Bonanza, Eldorado, Hunker and Dominion – that branched off the Klondike and Yukon rivers. The great influx of gold seekers soon transformed Dawson City into a sprawling and flamboyant mining town with an itinerant population of almost thirty thousand people.

Founded by merchant Joseph Ladue and named after government geologist George M. Dawson, Dawson City grew rapidly in the frenetic years between 1897 and 1900 from a shanty town 300 kilometres from the Arctic Circle to the largest and most colourful Canadian community west of Winnipeg. Though a veritable ghost town within decades of its founding (not unlike most boomtown communities), Dawson at the turn of the century had all the unbridled confidence of youth as hotels, saloons, dance halls and theatres replaced the tent city that had sprouted at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers within months of the gold strike. With its twenty hours of summer daylight Dawson must have presented an exhilarating scene to the thousands of new arrivals who were not too exhausted or penniless to appreciate the sight. Wide, dusty streets that quickly turned to mud at the first rain meandered through a town of hastily constructed false front buildings reminiscent of a Hollywood film set.

It was here that the stuff of Klondike legend would first emerge. In the saloons of Dawson weary miners thousands of miles from home got drunk on over-priced liquor and gambled away their hard-won gold nuggets. Professional gamblers like Sam Bonnifield, Harry Woolrich and the Montana Kid plied their trade with great success, as did the dance hall girls who worked the tables at the Monte Carlo, Pioneer and Bank saloons. At the Orpheum Theatre, the Opera House and the Palace Grand, nightly shows featured an eclectic offering of one-act plays, shooting exhibitions, prize fights and sentimental songs. Nine-year-old Margie Newman, according to popular historian Pierre Berton, was able to bring "tears to the eyes of men far from their ... families" when she sang on the stages of Front Street. And while the North West Mounted Police, and later the Yukon Field Force, were able to maintain control over the largely American population of the town and the neighbouring gold fields, for a time Dawson remained a wide-open mining community in the frontier tradition.

At the height of the gold rush it was perhaps inevitable that the garish life of Dawson would produce a larger-than-life cast of characters. If Big Alex McDonald was known as the "King of the Klondike" for his shrewd speculation in gold claims, Kate Rockwell, a pretty young dance hall girl and *soubrette* much sought after by the moneyed of Dawson, became "Queen

Credit: Vancouver Public Library

of the Klondike", and would remain a favourite of newspaper writers until her death in 1957. Swiftwater Bill Gates, who owned the Monte Carlo Dance Hall, was renowned for his top hat and Prince Albert coat and could usually be found playing high-stakes poker at Dawson's gambling tables. Similarly, Arizona Charlie Meadows, a veteran of the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, cut an impressive figure on the streets of Dawson with his sombrero, shoulder-length hair and buckskin jacket. In 1899 Meadows built the Palace Grand Theatre, which was home to many of Dawson's more colourful theatrical presentations in the thrilling days before the turn of the century.

Away from the bright lights of Dawson, however, the gold seeker's life was one of almost constant toil. The few *cheechakos*, or newcomers, who actually made it to the gold fields were often unprepared for the harsh sub-arctic climate and the hard life of a northern gold miner. The traditional panning for flakes of gold in icy creek beds soon gave way to more elaborate extraction techniques as prospectors built fires to melt the permanently frozen ground, thus enabling them to tunnel to the "pay streak" that lay near bed-rock. In springtime, runoff from the hills was channelled into wooden sluice boxes where the heavier gold was left as residue after the gravel had been washed away. Though some claims made their owners fabulously wealthy, many hardly justified the effort and expense it took to work the frozen piece of ground.

Before any claim could be staked, of course, the eager gold seeker had to reach the Klondike, a journey that proved to be expensive, exhausting and often dangerous. Of the various routes to the gold fields (including the Peace and Mackenzie rivers and the White Pass route from Skagway, Alaska) it was the Chilkoot Trail that has come to symbolize the "Trail of 98". It commenced in Dyea on the Alaskan panhandle, rose to a 3,500-foot summit at the Chilkoot Pass, and ended at Lake Lindeman in northern British Columbia. Caught in a single scene familiar to many, the photograph of a long line of men ascending the steep face of the pass bent double with their supplies has come to epitomize the gold rush itself. And it was on the Chilkoot that the Tlingit and Chilkoot peoples carried on a thriving business as packers and guides for the stampeders. Today, the litter of this influx – the possessions left behind by weary gold seekers – can still be seen along the trail.

Ironically, by the time Robert Service arrived in the Yukon in 1904 to pen his famous poems, the Klondike Gold Rush had all but ended. The population of Dawson City had plummeted to less than ten thousand, as the gold began to give out and miners moved off to new strikes near Nome in western Alaska. In their place came the large mining concerns such as the Yukon Consolidated Gold Company which used mammoth steam-driven dredges to search the creek beds for the gold left behind by early stampeders. By 1904 hydraulic mining had become a mainstay of the Klondike economy as powerful streams of water were used to tear the soil and gravel from hillsides so that the underlying gold could be washed out. Mining carries on to this day in the Yukon, but it is the "gold" left behind by thousands of tourists who visit Dawson City every summer to experience the legacy of the Klondike rush that has rekindled the economy of this once flourishing frontier town.

In this issue a number of articles explore aspects of the Klondike Gold Rush and shed light on some of the lesser known tales that make up the mosaic of this fascinating story. The lively prose of the period has left us with detailed descriptions of the Gold Rush, but as archivist David Mattison suggests it is the visual record of that event – the thousands of photographs from the Klondike that were taken by a variety of commercial photographers – that endure as the compelling images, or "photo nuggets", that most clearly resonate with people today.

The Klondike Gold Rush remains a unique event in Canadian history, an intense and exciting interlude that ended almost as quickly as it had begun. Despite its brevity it holds a special place in Canadian history. Retold in popular prose, fiction, verse, on television and on screen, the story of the Klondike Gold Rush has remained an enduring icon of the last northern frontier in all its hoary mythology. ◆

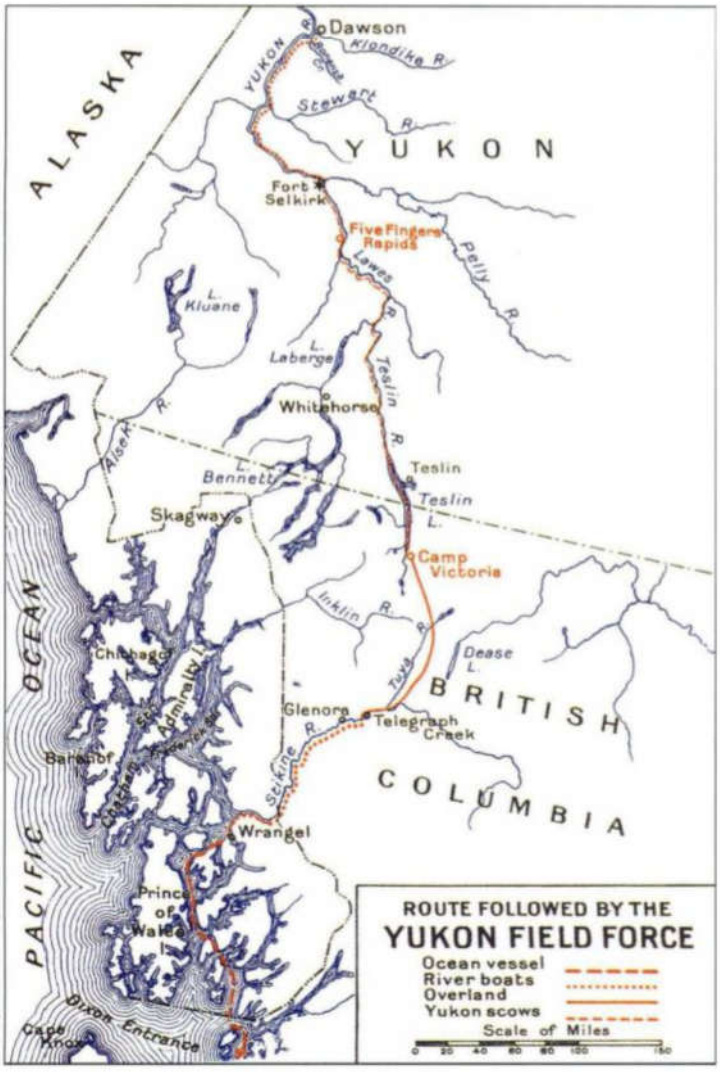
Robert Coutts is a historian with Parks Canada in Winnipeg.

Yukon Field Force 1898–1900

By Ian McCulloch

GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! the banner headline of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* proclaimed in 1897, and the Klondike Gold Rush was on with a vengeance. As thousands of gold seekers from all parts of the world flocked to the distant Yukon Territory, the resources of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) were stretched to the limit.

Newly appointed Commissioner for the Territory, Major J.M. Walsh, a famous "Mountie" himself, wrote to his Minister that his new district was "in the hands of a foreign element" and believed that "it would be the easiest thing in the world for a few bold men to take possession". Police Superintendent Charles Constantine, not given to overstatement, confirmed his superior's fears when he noted that Dawson's population of 30,000 consisted largely of "the sweepings of the slums and the result of a general jail delivery."



The Royal Canadian Regiment Archives

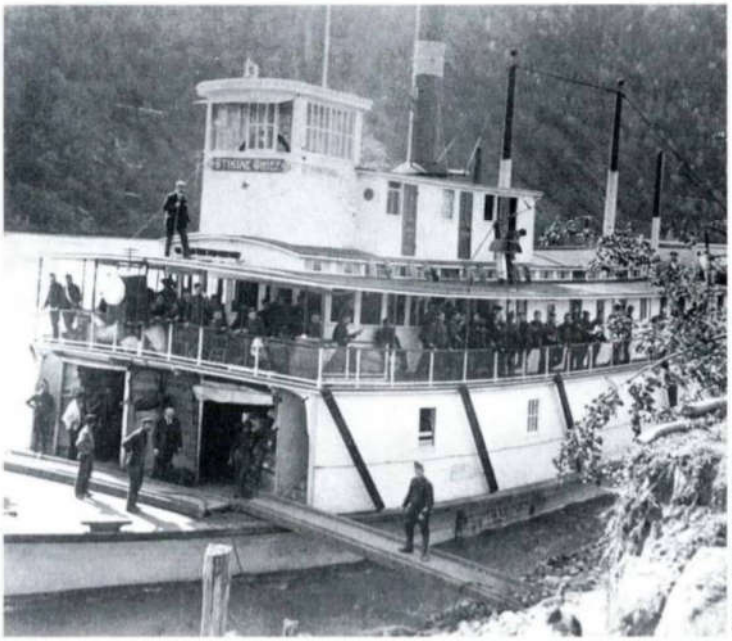
The Canadian government decided that the police in the Yukon needed support and a decision was taken to send 200 soldiers of the regular force into the territory (soldiers were cheaper than paying additional policemen). On the surface it would be a simple aid to the civil power operation, a move to help the NWMP maintain law and order. But it was much more than that. It would be a determined display of sovereignty, a show of force to the United States that Canada was not prepared to let the Yukon go the way of Oregon fifty years before.

Canadian military historian Brereton Greenhous (who has actually walked the route taken by the Yukon Field Force) states, "a locally-planned, pro-American coup, brought about by frustration over inappropriate mining regulations ... and then carried through along the general lines of those which had brought both California and Oregon into the American union, may have been unlikely but was always a possibility...." Some 80% of the Yukon Territory's population was American, a rough-and-ready crowd and well-armed. "The proximity of a formed body of well-armed troops, held in ready reserve", he adds, "was bound to discourage precipitate action on the part of malcontents. The Field Force may well have played a greater role in the evolution of Canada than the record would indicate."

The government proceeded with its plan to send troops in the spring of 1898, calling upon units of the Permanent Force to raise a detachment to be known as the Yukon Field Force. More than half of the Force came from The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), the rest provided by the Royal Canadian Artillery and the Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCD). All were volunteers

Above: Members of the Yukon Field Force aboard the "Stikine Chief".

Below: Aided by this photo and information gleaned from the diary of a member of the Yukon Field Force, the Assault Pioneers of First battalion The Royal Canadian Regiment were able to locate the exact site of Camp Victoria.



Glenbow Archives, NA-3755-15

National Archives of Canada

for the job, a major inducement being double pay. Command of the Field Force was given to Lieutenant-Colonel T.D.B. Evans, a former RCR officer who had transferred to the Dragoons. Six women would also accompany the Force: four were members of the Victorian Order of Nurses, specially recruited by the Governor General's wife, Lady Aberdeen, the fifth, Miss Faith Fenton, was a reporter for the Toronto *Globe*, whose dispatches are one of the sources for the history of the Force, and the sixth, Mrs. Starnes, wished to join her husband, a NWMP inspector in Dawson.

The Force was mobilized and outfitted in Ottawa with the expectation that it would remain at least two years in the Yukon. It was issued with special uniforms for the winter months: heavy black peajackets with matching trousers, fur caps, fur collars, black woollen knee stockings, woollen mitts with buckskin covers and beef boots lacing to the knee. Each man also received a personal gift from Lady Aberdeen – a small container holding pins, needles, safety-pins, and thread.

The Force left Ottawa by train on 6 May 1898 after being reviewed and addressed by Lord Aberdeen. After a brief stop in Winnipeg to pick up the RCD contingent of the Force, they arrived in Vancouver on 11 May and took billets in a disused theatre, the officers moving into a hotel nearby. The next several days were spent packing, labelling and loading 60 tons of supplies aboard ships which would carry them north to Alaskan waters.

There were three main routes into the Yukon. The two most commonly in use were through the American ports of Dyea and Skagway and then up the Chilkoot or White Pass respectively. The Chilkoot became famous in a classic photograph showing would-be miners and prospectors toiling up a snow-clogged mountain, enormous packs weighing them down. The third less-travelled route began with a sail up the Stikine River and continued with a long and difficult overland trek to the waters connecting with the upper Yukon River. Wishing to avoid asking the Americans for permission to march Canadian troops over United States soil, the government chose to send the Yukon Field Force by the Stikine route, sometimes referred to as "the all-Canadian trail". They would still have to sail through American territorial waters at the mouth of the Stikine, but a treaty was already in place granting Canada free navigational access to the river. The history of *The Royal Canadian Regiment 1883–1993* notes that "the government's decision condemned the Yukon Field Force to one of the toughest marches ever made by Canadian troops."

The steamer *Islander* brought the Force from Vancouver to Wrangell, the American community at the mouth of the Stikine, arriving on 16 May. There, the Force transferred with its supplies from the *Islander* to river steamers, the *Stikine Chief* and the *Strathcona*. "Only one mishap in the transshipment occurred," according to The RCR history. "Due to the breaking of a sling, the Force's two-year supply of coffee fell into the sea and sank in fourteen fathoms of water. Coffee addicts in the Force found little

"Miss Fenton ... descended the steamer gangplank in a travelling dress so short as to indecently expose her ankles! The horrified bachelor colonel quickly deputed the only married woman, Mrs. Starnes, to have a quick chat with the young reporter."

Glenbow Archives, NA-3755-70

Lieutenant-Colonel T.D.B. Evans

consolation ... in the fact that the supply of scurvy-preventing lime-juice was transshipped without misadventure."

It was also at Wrangell that Lieutenant-Colonel Evans faced and overcame the first emergency of his Yukon expedition. Miss Fenton, the *Globe* reporter, descended the steamer gangplank in a travelling dress so short as to indecently expose her ankles! The horrified bachelor colonel quickly deputed the only married woman, Mrs. Starnes, to have a quick chat with the young reporter. When the Force left Wrangell on its way up the Stikine, a strip of black sateen had appeared as a border around the bottom of Miss Fenton's dress. Colonel Evans's "brutal and licentious soldiery" had been saved from temptation!

After four days, the steamers reached the head of normal navigation at the hamlet of Glenora and the backbreaking work of unloading began yet again. Miss Fenton described the Queen's birthday celebration at Glenora on 24 May as a "pretty moment in the life of this little far northern village of tents":

> The entire [Yukon Field] Force had marched down from the campground and flashed its scarlet ranks along the broad trail that stands for the one Glenora street. The men made a splendid appearance, and none would have guessed the hard work of pitching tents and storing supplies that had been undergone the day before. The marchpast and the salute, cheers for the Queen and again for the Klondike miners, with a responsive cheer from the miners for Colonel Evans and the Yukon Force, this was the movement and sound, but only an artist could have caught the vivid colouring. Ranks of red coats outlined against white canvas tents and piney shacks, and flanked on either side by several hundred civilians all sorts and conditions of men in all sorts of attire. Sombreros, knee-high moccasins, sweaters, men unshaved and collarless but splendid in bronzed strength; beyond these again, pack animals browsing, slow-moving oxen, and mules whose heels gave startled emphasis to the rattle of musketry [of a *feu de joie*]; in the background, the ever-present hills and ... swift-rushing river....

It was also at Glenora that logistical problems set in. Mules to carry the 60 tons of essential supplies had been contracted in advance from the Hudson's Bay Company but, according to Evans, the Company men "had failed to grasp the magnitude of the work to be performed, and had not provided the necessary number of pack animals." While Evans and his administrative officer sorted out the muddle, the officers and non-commissioned officers of the force instituted a rigorous training schedule designed to toughen the men to carry heavy loads over the rugged trails that lay ahead. They were assisted by Hudson's Bay Company men and NWMP constables well-versed in the art of packing heavy burdens. Needless to say, this was less than popular with some of the men.

"One of the companies ... said to be of Fredericton ... threatened to mutiny because they were being used as pack mules and badly fed,"

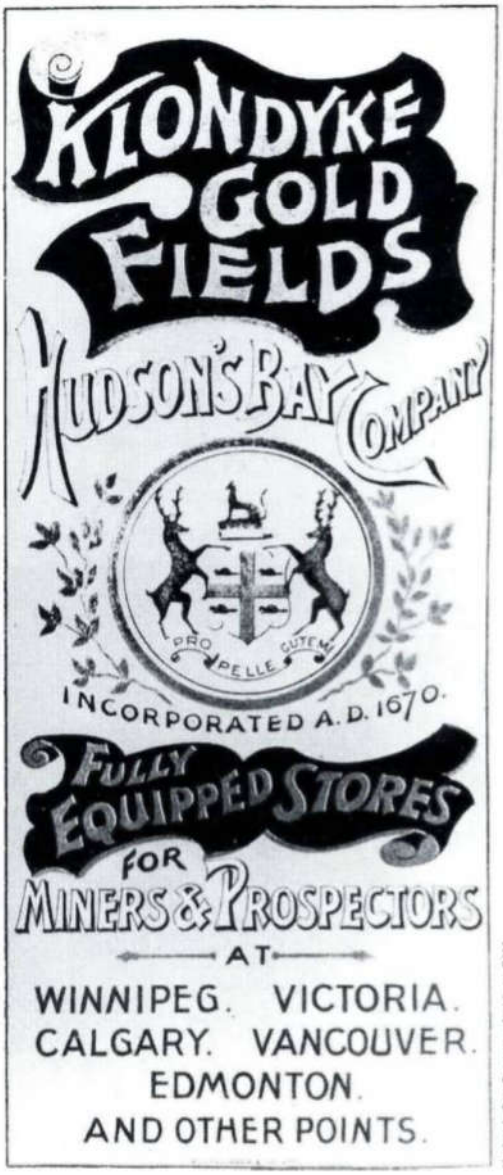
reported a sensational story in the Ottawa *Evening Citizen* on 28 June. "Colonel Evans is having a lively time of it with his men." Evans's own report of the affair, however, was closer to fact and illustrates the wise choice that had been made in his selection as Commanding Officer:

> The only [disciplinary action required] ... was at Glenora, when three men who had fallen out when marching with heavy packs and tump lines and, when being ordered to be confined, used insubordinate language to a NCO.... Also a Lance-Corporal ... remained in his tent when the same parade was formed up ... and was reported to have said that "he was not going to be turned into a mule" or words to that effect. I punished the men and discharged the Lance-Corporal as worthless.... As the Force was to march the following day [9 June] I deemed [the latter action] advisable rather than to convene a court martial. Realizing that this NCO might have been poisoning the minds of the men in the tent in which he was ... I paraded this detachment and pointed out to the NCOs and men the injury an incident of this kind, however small, might inflict upon its good name.... I remitted the punishment inflicted upon the three [privates] the previous day, in order that the detachment might make a fresh start with a clean sheet.

The following day the Force moved up to Telegraph Creek where the infamous Teslin Trail began. Here the Force unloaded their 60 tons of bulk supplies for the last time and with the help of Hudson's Bay packers and mules carried them from the wharf up a steep cliff path to a hill nearby. It was also here that the main body was broken down into 35-man detachments. Each mule would carry 200 lbs each, while each man would carry 50 lbs.

The Teslin Trail, 156 miles of bush, rock, ridges, and mosquito-infested swamps and creek beds, was a trail in name only. The RCR history notes, "the word 'trail' suggests the march of the Force was over a semi-prepared road. Actually, there was nothing of the kind."

A week previous, an advance party of 50 men had set off, each man skilled with the saw and axe. Their job was to mark the trail, construct bridges, and, more importantly, march as quickly as possible to Lake Teslin. There they would take passage to Fort Selkirk, an old Hudson's Bay Company post at the junction of the Pelly River with the upper Yukon River. At Fort Selkirk, the nominal capital of the Yukon territory, they would construct log barracks to serve as the Force's headquarters and winter accommodation.



Hudson's Bay Company Archives, PAM

With the help of local workers, these buildings were to be ready when the main body marched in, sometime in September.

The march of the Yukon Field Force was a true feat of endurance. Major-General E.T.H. Hutton, commanding the Militia in Canada at the time, likened it to Lord Wolseley's famous Red River Expedition of 1870. Colonel Evans's official report detailing the march itself was lost through the ice of the Lewes River in November. However, Lady Aberdeen received a letter from "Lt-Col Evans, a good friend of ours" and recorded his personal comments in her diary for posterity:

> ... a weary tramp on foot for 150 miles or rather 200 miles if the actual distance is counted across a terrible country boulders & huge

Glenbow Archives, NA-3755-59

An advance party of the Force building the headquarters at Fort Selkirk during the summer of 1898.

fallen trees were the least part of the difficulties for the worst part was the horrible swamps through which they had to wade up to their waists. And nothing to eat but hard biscuits, rancid strong bacon & black tea & this in midst of great heat & under perpetual attack from the biggest bloodthirstiest hordes of mosquitoes. Even though Col. Evans said at the outset that these expeditions always sounded worse than they were, [he now] admits that [this one] is very bad.... He says the Nurses did splendidly & that they were a great comfort for several of the men that got ill – some with rheumatic fever. The only solace of which both Col Evans and Miss Powell [a nurse] speak is the glorious scenery & the profusion of flowers of which they have made collections en route. They say that the view from some of the summits they passed over was superb.... The Nurses say that their clothes & their boots which were intended to last them for three years are completely worn out....

One private soldier on the march composed a song which became a favourite with his fellow soldiers:

Damn the journey, Damn the track
Damn the distance there and back,
Damn the sunshine, Damn the weather,
Damn the goldfields altogether!

A diary entry of Private Edward Lester of The Royal Canadian Regiment described the last 50 miles to Lake Teslin as a living hell. He wrote:

The trail traverses an undiscovered country, so to speak: a hill bog-land & a hill log-land alternately. It is either log or bog all the way.... We are passing through a country of skeleton trees.... Sometimes our way lay for miles & miles through blackened, smoking trees & over bogs yet licked by tongues of flame, tracing the trail as best we could over the hot, smoking ashes, whilst the crash of falling trees added to the intensity of the situation. Only those that have undergone the experience can realize the depressing effect of the journey over a burnt-out track of ashes, blackness, & desolation.

As the successive detachments reached the head of beautiful Lake Teslin their spirits were immediately uplifted. From here on the journey would be made by water!

Lake Teslin, however, boasted only one small steamer, the *Anglian*. Colonel Evans and 80 men boarded it for the first run down the lake, their aim being to go on ahead to join the advance party at Fort Selkirk and assist in preparations. Before the Colonel left, he instructed his men to construct five boats and four large scows to carry everything north and gave them a date to leave by, in case the frail-looking steamer failed to return. It was as well he did, for the *Anglian* struck a rock on its return journey. On 29 August, a motley flotilla of scows and boats under the second-in-command, Major D.D. Young, set off down Lake Teslin.

At the northern end of the lake the route led down the Hootalinqua River to the Lewes River,* an upper tributary of the Yukon River. The last dangerous obstacle to be negotiated by the Force was the shooting of the dreaded Five Fingers Rapids. These, according to The RCR history, were "towering jagged rocks as their name

*The Hootalinqua is now the Teslin River and the Lewes has been redesignated a portion of the Yukon River.

Lanss and Duclos / National Archives of Canada, C-1338

The Force on physical exercise duty, Dawson, 1900.

implied, [standing] grimly in mid-stream, while around them, in a swirl of water and foam, ran five channels, of which only one was navigable." Faith Fenton of the *Globe* takes up the tale:

> The odds were great, with bulky, slow-steering scows, and [Major Young's] jolly face grew grave as, drawing his little boat to shore just above the rapids he looked up at the oncoming scows with their burden of men. They were at a point where no word of his could avail. Down sped No.1 Scow ["Lady of the Lake"] striking the channel centre exactly. We could almost touch the frowning rock as we sped through the turbulent tossing narrows. Down came No.2 ["Bug-a-Boo"] and No.1 looked back to cheer. Would No.3 ["Nova Scotian"] strike it? She had turned a little; she was out of the current; would she right herself in time? The Major grew white. "God help the poor fellows if she misses," he muttered. Ah! She has cleared it and down she speeds in safety, with No.4 ["La Canadienne"] close following. After that came 50 miles of easy sailing among bars and small islands and thus we came to Selkirk....

Arriving on 11 September, after a water journey of 400 miles from Camp Victoria at the head of Lake Teslin, the Force found that the advance party at Fort Selkirk had made great progress in the erection of their winter headquarters. Around a central parade ground stood a group of 12 log buildings, not complete, but all roofed. With the help of the rest of the Force these were easily completed before the early onset of the Yukon winter.

Almost immediately, Superintendent Sam Steele, commanding the NWMP in Dawson, requested to have 50 men of the Force sent to Dawson to assist his hard-pressed men in the maintenance of law and order. Colonel Evans complied, dispatching 50 men by river steamer to Dawson on 1 October 1898. These soldiers' first glimpse of the so-called "Mecca of the North" must have been somewhat disappointing.

"Try and picture for yourselves a wide flat stretch of marshy ground with a background of high hills, on the shore of a mighty river rushing by," wrote an English reporter of the *Illustrated*

The Force in camp.

Woodside, H.J. / National Archives of Canada, PA-16894

London News. "Cover this shore with as many tents of all shapes and sizes as [you can imagine]. In the water along the beach ... place hundreds of the roughest of wooden boats and see a big motley crowd of men and women and children, in all sorts of conditions of garb ... and above all a blazing sun and plenty of dust blown about by a persistent wind, ... and you have Dawson, the golden city, as it appeared to me as I landed on the 14th of June, 1898."

The Dawson detachment disembarked and dragged one of the Force's two Maxim machine-guns, which was mounted on a gun carriage, to the Mounted Police barracks where temporary accommodation had been prepared for them. The RCR history records: "Their welcome [at the barracks] was warm, though somewhat marred when Miss Fenton lowered to the ground a pet cat which she had brought from Vancouver. Not expecting cats, the Police had neglected to chain their dogs, five of which, flashing as it seemed from nowhere, tore the unfortunate cat to shreds before the police, or the startled troops, could effect a rescue."

Steele's men, they found, ruled over Dawson with an iron hand, willing to turn a blind eye where minor infractions of the law were concerned, but adamant in their suppression of deliberate crime. The Police had made it clear from the outset that they would maintain the sanctity of life and property under the laws of Canada no matter what. Gunmen and desperadoes who had flocked to the gold fields to make an easy dollar tried all means to loosen the grip of the authorities, but to no avail. The soldiers' arrival, however, was a welcome relief to the Mounties as The RCR history notes "from the moment when the first detachment of the Yukon Field Force arrived in Dawson City, the position of the Police was made secure." The Dawson detachment, reinforced by another 20 men a month later, was "conspicuous at first in their scarlet jackets [gunners in blue] and white helmets.... Later in winter clothing, the men of the Force ... became a familiar sight, as they mounted guard at their own quarters, posted sentries to protect the gold in the banks, helped the police in guarding prisoners at hard labour, and, off duty, appeared in the streets of the town and the country round about."

Of all the duties that befell the men of the Force, none at first was more interesting than guarding the supplies of gold. Private F.H. Freeland of The RCR wrote in his diary:

> Tonight I am on the duty of inside bank guard at the Canadian Bank of Commerce, from 7 p.m. until 7 tomorrow morning. At the appointed hour, I report myself at the side door, with rifle, bayonet, side-arms and 10 rounds of service ammunition. Once inside, I'm shown the contents of the vault – bars and bars of gold and small bags with nuggets of gold. I am told I am responsible for all I have seen. I am then handed a fully-loaded, 45-calibre revolver, with orders to use

A rare photograph from the Archives of The Royal Canadian Regiment showing the Field Force having Christmas dinner in Dawson, 1900. The Maxim machine-gun in the foreground was no doubt brought in to protect it from the freezing temperature.

Glenbow Archives, NA-3755-34

Soldier with tumpline and pack.

it if need be, and am shown an electric-alarm button, which rings a bell upstairs where the bank staff sleep, and in the Mounted Police guard room. A cold lunch has been laid out for me and I am allowed to read and smoke, but on no consideration am I to sleep. If any of the staff goes out, I am given a signal, and a pass-word when he returns to let him in by the side door. As the night passes, I can hear the tramp, tramp of the sentry outside, but I am not in communication with him, as the heavy wooden shutters are closed and all the doors are barred and locked. It is hard to stay awake in the small hours, but the loud snores of a heavy sleeper upstairs help some, and I manage to keep alert until I am relieved by the janitor about 7.10 a.m.

Throughout the long winter of 1898-99, the Yukon Field Force remained split between Dawson and Selkirk, though the men were rotated through both posts in their execution of garrison and police duties. Arduous work and bitter cold were hardships all the men shared and endured, but troops, when at Dawson, escaped the loneliness and isolation of the Selkirk garrison. "To some of the more sensitive men at Selkirk", states The RCR history, "the succession of short cold days and long silent nights constituted a mental martyrdom which drew upon all their reserves of fortitude and determination." Others were inspired by the grandeur of it all, especially the Northern Lights. Like bank clerk Robert Service, Private Lester was compelled to put pen to paper:

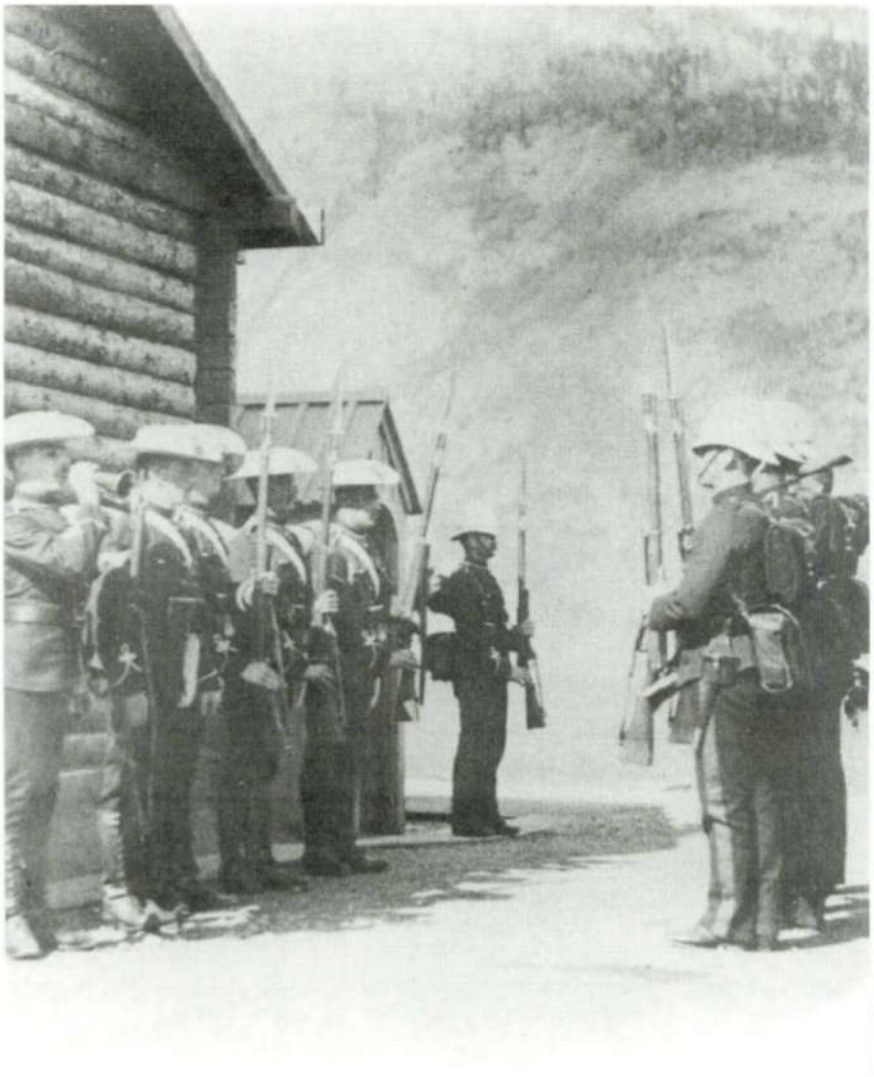
... from over the mountain to the North, rose a pillar of light, gradually widening out fan-like, rolling round upon itself in endless coils towards the zenith & looking like a huge cone of fire, then suddenly breaking up and spreading over the whole of the Northern sky, thinning out & disappearing into sort of luminous mist ... a marvellous sight & one hardly to be described in mere words....

By spring 1899, Ottawa had been informed by the new Yukon Commissioner, William Ogilvie, that "it is universally conceded by all right-thinking people that there is perhaps no more peaceable and orderly town in Canada than the town of Dawson", a testimonial if there ever was one to the effectiveness of the NWMP and the Yukon Field Force. But other more important factors were in play and would determine the future of the Force. General Hutton, in command of the Canadian Militia, was lobbying for the return of the regular soldiers, for it was nearly "impossible to satisfactorily carry out the instructional system for officers and NCOs of the Active Militia" owing to "the reduced numbers of Permanent troops now available". But it was the Boer War unfolding in South Africa, nearly halfway around the globe, which resulted in the eventual recall of half the Force, including their commanding officer, late in the summer of 1899.

Colonel Evans was succeeded in the command by Major T.D.R. Hemming of The RCR and the headquarters of the Force was moved from Selkirk to Dawson. In 1900, when the critical period of the gold rush was over and steam dredges and private companies were replacing individual prospectors, the rest of the Force (which had lately been redesignated "The Yukon Garrison") left for the outside world. Their journey home was luxurious compared to their rugged march of '98. Taking passage first to Whitehorse by riverboat, the last 100 members of the Yukon Field Force boarded a train of the new White Pass and Yukon Railway for Skagway. From Alaska, a liner transported them in comfort back to Vancouver.

The Yukon Field Force, the first regular troops ever to serve in garrison in Canada's subarctic territories, provides an early example of our nation's willingness to claim sovereignty over the North. An interesting postscript to the achievements of the Yukon Field Force and its contribution to Canadian history are best summed up by a message sent to members of B Company, First Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, eighty-five years after the event!

In 1983, the modern day "Royal Canadians" retraced the exact steps of their regimental



The Royal Canadian Regiment Archives

CHANGING THE GUARD.
A summer change of duty between soldiers of The Royal Canadian Dragoons, left, and The Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry in Dawson, 1900.

forbears as part of The RCR's 100th birthday celebrations. After several backbreaking days on the Teslin trail (which has not improved in the slightest from the days of the '98 March) and a 400-mile boat ride down to the Yukon River, the lads of B Company found a message from the Yukon Government leader, Mr C.W. Pearson, waiting for them at the end of their journey. It read in part:

> ... I want to express my appreciation and admiration for the efforts you and the men under your command have devoted to the recreation of an important historical event in Yukon's proud history. The officers and men of the Yukon Field Force were indeed of heroic stature, and I'm sure that you, better than any of us here, now appreciate the rigours and trials they endured, especially during their overland trek in 1898. The fact that Yukon remained a vital part of our nation during the turbulent gold rush days can be attributed, in no small part, to the presence in Fort Selkirk and Dawson of the Yukon Field Force. ◆

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B.C. Archives, D-06932

From Founding to Frontier: The VON in the Klondike

By Cheryl MacDonald

VON nurses accompany the Yukon Field Force to the Klondike in 1898. Left to right: Margaret Payson, Rachel Hanna, Georgina Powell, Amy Scott with "The Globe" reporter Faith Fenton.

The idea for a visiting order of nurses to tend the poor and those in outlying districts was conceived by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, a controversial and outspoken reformer who was the wife of Canada's Governor General, John Campbell Gordon, 7th Earl of Aberdeen. She was familiar with the system of district nursing in Britain, and with the work of Dr. Alfred Worcester, who had established an American counterpart in Waltham, Massachusetts. Persuasive and determined, it was not difficult for Lady Aberdeen to convince several influential people, including Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, to back the project as a means of commemorating Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.

As a result of her founding the National Council of Women, Lady Aberdeen had become aware of the need for visiting nurses in various parts of Canada. Early in 1897, a committee was formed to fill this need. On 2 February, the *Ottawa Citizen* published an article describing the plan and the next day a medical advisory committee was formed. The following week, at an open meeting, Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier formally proposed the formation of the "Victorian Order of Home Helpers". Clifford Sifton, then Minister of the Interior, seconded the motion, and the organizing committee decided to seek the Queen's approval of the plan.

Within the week, the Aberdeens released a detailed account of the proposed organization. Their statement included the qualifications required of candidates: training in nursing, midwifery, first aid and housekeeping. Furthermore:

> It is proposed that no person under twenty-eight or thirty years of age should be admitted to the Order, and, when admitted, an undertaking should be given to continue the work, provided health does not prevent it, for a period of at least three years.

In creating the Victorian Order of Nurses (the name was changed around April) Lady Aberdeen and her supporters hoped to establish a group of highly skilled nurses capable of assisting doctors or working independently in isolated locations. It was this second aim which provoked bitter controversy. Possibly the rumours started with misleading newspaper reports, or with gossip circulated by people who thought the Governor General and Lady Aberdeen favoured the liberals. By late May, the *Halifax Herald* was criticizing the Order in an editorial and stating that a minimum of one million dollars would be required to finance the organization. Around the same time, the Toronto *Globe* reported that a meeting called in Winnipeg to explain the Victorian Order of Nurses was so poorly attended by members of that city's medical establishment that the project could not possibly succeed.

The two main objections to the Order were that the nurses would not be properly trained and that they would deprive country doctors of their practice because of their lower fees. In reality, any

National Archives of Canada, C-690

Sir Charles Tupper. "A vociferous opponent".

Ontario Archives, S.17483

Lady Aberdeen. "A controversial and outspoken reformer".

woman wishing to join the Victorian Order of Nurses would have to be a qualified nurse and willing to take additional instruction in district nursing. When necessary these nurses would be able to handle cases normally handled by doctors but they would usually work under the direction of a physician. Nevertheless, the criticism against the Order continued, reaching ludicrous levels in some instances. For example, on 4 June, the *Ottawa Citizen* reported that candidates for the Order "must be women of not less than 45 years of age and well-versed in the Bible."

While the *Citizen* had misstated the qualifications required for the nurses, it accurately reported the Ontario Medical Association's disapproval of the Order. One of the most vociferous opponents was Sir Charles Tupper, who had been prime minister for ten weeks before Laurier's Liberals ended an 18-year Conservative regime. Influential in medical and political circles, Tupper was understandably resentful of anyone who sympathized with Laurier's government, and that included the Aberdeens. On at least one occasion he referred to the nurses of the Order as "female quacks". Tupper also endorsed the medical association's newspaper advertisements warning doctors to avoid involvement with the Order.

Before opposition to the Order became public, the prime minister had virtually promised that parliament would vote money for the support of the VON. George Foster, Member of Parliament for York County, New Brunswick, had agreed to support Laurier's motion, proving that not all Conservatives sympathized with Tupper. Unfortunately, the controversy made it politically advisable to withdraw government support. Thus, by the fall of 1897, less than $30,000 had been raised to finance the Order. To make matters more embarrassing, Queen Victoria had already sanctioned the use of her name for the Order, which now looked as though it would never exist.

"We in Toronto do not feed on Royal pap."

A less dedicated personality would have abandoned the plan, but Lady Aberdeen was noted for her persistence. Convinced that there was a need for visiting nurses, and buoyed by the knowledge that there were supporters, including members of the medical community, she continued to work for the establishment of the Order. And, realizing that her sex and lack of medical knowledge might handicap her in any attempt to win over Canadian doctors, she enlisted the aid of a champion. He was Dr. Alfred Worcester, Professor of Hygiene at Harvard University and founder of the Waltham Training School for District Nurses in Massachusetts. Lady Aberdeen was familiar with his work, which was based on the British district nursing system, and had visited Waltham, where Dr. Worcester promised to offer any aid he could. In late 1897, he travelled to Ottawa to convince the medical establishment there of the benefits of the Victorian Order of Nurses. He succeeded with the Ottawa doctors, but the real test was still ahead. Despite a warning from his friend William Osler to have nothing to do with "those pestiferous Aberdeens", Worcester went to Toronto and

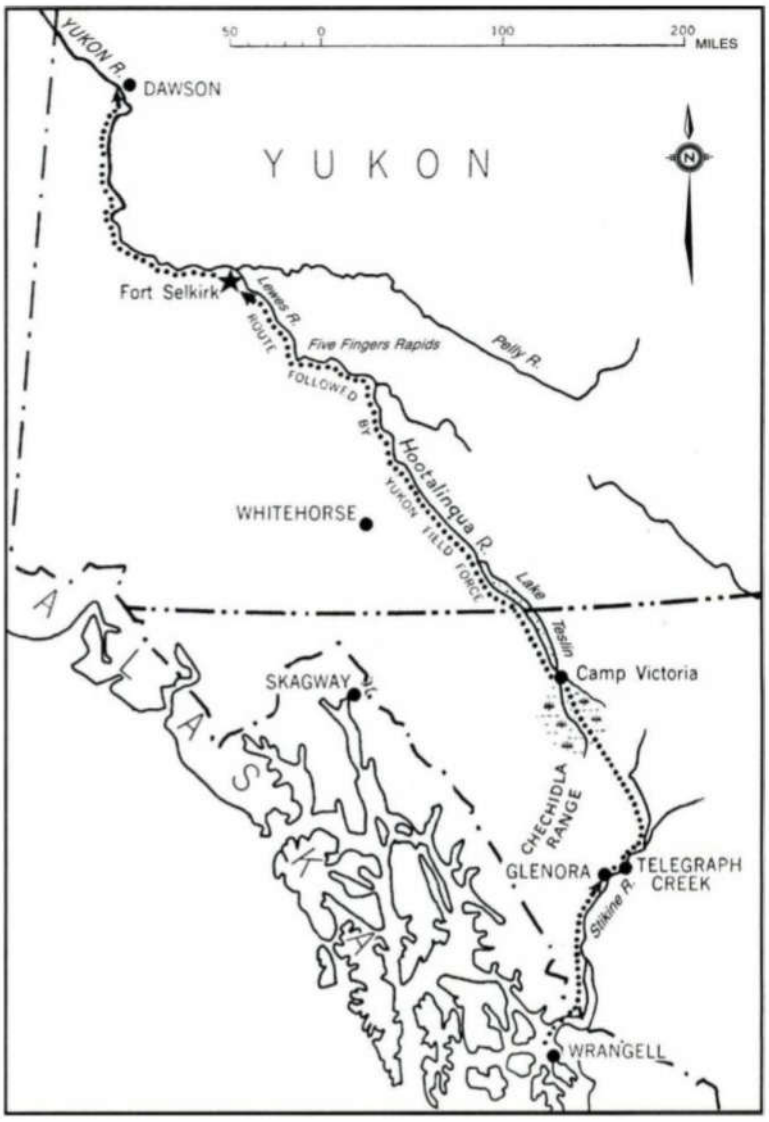
arranged a meeting of area physicians. Those who attended the meeting were happy to drink the liquor and smoke the cigars provided by the Aberdeens, who were in temporary residence in Toronto, but pointedly ignored Dr. Worcester's lecture on district nursing. They talked loudly throughout his speech and jeered as he argued in favour of the Victorian Order of Nurses. It seemed nothing could convince the Toronto doctors to support the plan.

What turned the tables was Victorian chivalry. According to Dr. Worcester's recollection of the event, one of the doctors stated that "we in Toronto do not feed on royal pap, and that the name Victorian ... adds no weight with us to any proposed institution". Worcester, an American, gallantly defended the Queen as the epitome of "exalted womanhood." Suddenly, Worcester was no longer a Yankee propounding a crank theory – he was a gentleman. Several doctors whisked him off to their club for more drinks, cigars and conversation. By the time reports of Dr. Worcester's gallantry appeared in the newspaper, the last bastion of opposition to the VON had been overcome.

Meanwhile, across the country, the local councils of women had been working quietly to raise funds for the support of the Order. In March of 1898, plans were underway to send four nurses to the Klondike.

More than a year had passed since the discovery of gold at Rabbit (later Bonanza) Creek. By the winter of 1897–8, it had become obvious that many social problems accompanied fortune seekers who swarmed into the Klondike, and one of those problems was the shortage of medical care. In response to Lady Aberdeen's inquiries, Rev. Robert M. Dickey wrote from Skagway that he had discussed the matter with Canadian officials and all agreed the nurses would be welcome in the Klondike. When Lady Aberdeen announced the appointment of four nurses for duty in the Klondike, the *Globe* published part of Rev. Dickey's letter. After describing the need for nurses and the supplies they would require, he emphasized the importance of allowing them to work independently:

> While it will be proper for your committee to give the ladies sent general instructions as to the course they ought to pursue, yet I cannot urge too strongly the necessity of giving them ample latitude in carrying out their work. Conditions here change so constantly and so rapidly that it is impossible for us living here to make arrangements definitely for the future: much less is it possible from a great distance.



The nurses chosen were Georgina Powell, a Nova Scotian, Margaret Payson from New Brunswick, Rachel Hanna from Toronto and Amy Scott who had come from Great Britain a few years before.

Two weeks following the announcement of the Klondike posting, the nurses were honoured at a dinner party and reception at Government House. The guests included Sir Sanford Fleming and Mrs. Laurier. Members of the Provisional Committee of the VON also attended. Out of consideration for the nurses, who had no evening gowns, the ladies of the committee wore morning dresses. The dinner was a lavish affair:

> Four round tables, each seating several guests, were arranged in the dining room, each table being decorated with green maple leaves, radiating from the centre of the table, where stood a handsome silver candelabra, the lights in

The Yukon Field Force Crossing Lake Teslin.

Woodside, H.J. / National Archives of Canada, PA-16882

Below: Major T. Gardiner, the Field Force Adjutant, Faith Fenton and Klondikers going to Glenora, May 1898.

Woodside, H.J. / National Archives of Canada, PA-16148

which were shaded with scarlet or yellow. Golden dishes of Etruscan filigree were filled with coloured bon bons, while others of dainty Dresden China held salted almonds.

Afterwards, the Governor General proposed toasts to the Queen and the nurses. Lady Aberdeen read the women their final instructions, and several prominent guests made speeches. For most, though, the highlight of the evening was the opportunity to inspect the outfits the nurses would take with them.

Along with the summer uniforms, of "neat brown duck suits made with a short skirt with bloomers and gaiters in the style of a natty bicycle suit", each nurse had been issued a walking suit, a waterproof suit, and a "winter suit of heavy blue blanket with a big hood to match lined with quilted silk". There were also rubber boots, hob-nail boots, wool-lined boots for sleeping in the winter, and felt boots for hospital wear, plus a variety of equipment the nurses might need on the trail, including mosquito nets and tool kits. In addition, each nurse had been given a Kodak camera to occupy her leisure time.

Within the week, the nurses were on their way west by train, accompanied by a special correspondent for the Toronto *Globe*, Faith Fenton, and a Mrs. Starnes, who was travelling to the Yukon to join her husband. At the request of local VON councils, the group stopped in Winnipeg, Regina, Vancouver and Victoria, where they were lavishly entertained. In Winnipeg the Hudson's Bay Company presented each nurse with a raccoon coat. In Vancouver, they joined the Yukon Field Force under Lieutenant-Colonel T.D.B. Evans. In return for a military escort to their destination, the nurses had agreed to care for sick or injured soldiers free of charge.

The soldiers' presence ruled out an American route through Skagway, Alaska. Instead, the expedition went up the Stikine River from Wrangell, to Glenora, Telegraph Creek, then overland to Teslin Lake, and on to Fort Selkirk and Dawson by boat. At Glenora the nurses split up. Georgina Powell, Amy Scott and Mrs. Starnes travelled with the advance party, while the other nurses and Faith Fenton travelled with the other detachment.

"Georgie" Powell wrote graphically of the rigours of the trail in letters to friends and reports to the VON:

> Through deep forest we went, where the trail was narrow and the branches of trees threatened our eyes or tore our veils disastrously; through tracks of burnt and blackened country; in some places the ashes still hot from recent burnings, and the dust rising in choking clouds under our feet ... over sharp and jagged rocks, where slipping would be dangerous, we went trampling, leaping, springing and climbing....

The swamps and bogs were especially hard on the animals when as many as twenty mules became stuck at once and had to be relieved of baggage, pulled out of the muck and reloaded. Fording a river was another adventure. At one point, the horse Nurse Scott was riding fell in four feet of water, soaking its rider, "but beyond a bad twisting and nervous shock she came out unhurt".

When Georgina Powell arrived at Fort Selkirk with the advance party she heard that a typhoid epidemic was raging among the miners and she and Mrs. Starnes left for Dawson.

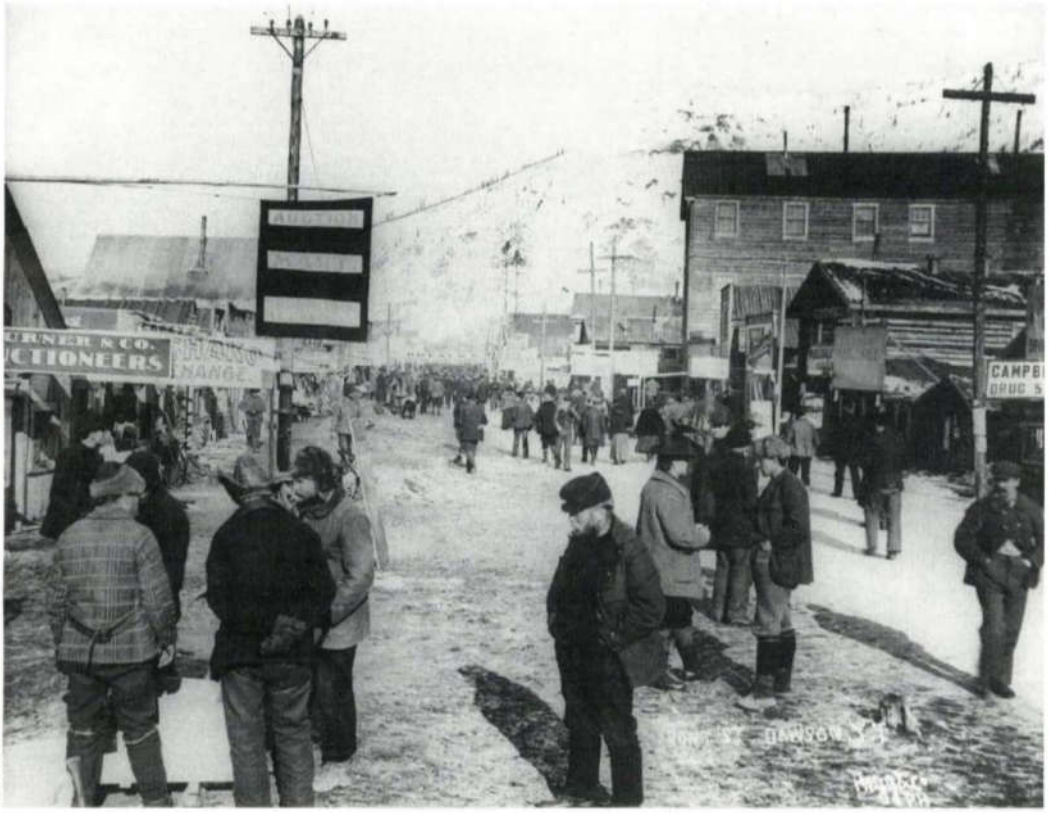
Regardless of the hardships the nurses faced

along the way, their work began long before reaching their destination. On 5 August, Faith Fenton wrote:

> We are rarely a day established in camp anywhere en route without an appeal for help from packer or miner, prostrated by accident, overwork, or the careless neglect habitual to a strong man. The fame of these two cheery nurses, their skill, their prompt kindness and willingness to aid, has spread up and down the trail, so that the sick man's first thought is to reach them, and his comrades' first efforts are directed towards bringing him within reach of their ministrations. Fourteen miles one sick man journeyed – every step of his horse a pain to have his tent placed outside the lines, but within reach of the nurses. Another and another lay near our different camps, ill with fevers, chiefly malaria or rheumatic, each needing and receiving the care of these skilled women. The craving of strong men in their sickness for a woman's care and their complete dependence upon them is a marvellous thing to witness and out here, where women are so few, a pathetic thing also.

Georgina Powell and Mrs. Starnes arrived in Dawson on 8 August after an overland march of nearly 180 miles. Three days later, Powell was at work in the Good Samaritan Hospital, two partially completed log structures built on a bog. Typhoid was raging. By the end of the second week, there were thirty-six patients, and Georgina Powell was appalled at the conditions.

> I thought I had seen something of typhoid fever, perhaps in its worst form bad enough truly, but nothing like this. Of severe hemorrhage [*sic*] cases we had six at one time. Typhoid with pneumonia, with malaria, congestion of the liver, rheumatism, neuralgia, sore throat, discharge from the ears, and sore eyes. Such sick men!



The Globe

Front Street, Dawson, c. 1898. Photo by E. Hegg.

Supplies were scarce or non-existent. There were no disinfectants, no linens, few mattresses or blankets. In the battle to control vermin, the hospital paid exorbitant rates for laundry services, spending four dollars to clean a single blanket.

When the three nurses arrived in Dawson they were promptly assigned to hospitals. Amy Scott, whose health was failing, went to the North West Mounted Police Barracks, which was well-run and well-equipped. Rachel Hanna went to the Good Samaritan Hospital and also cared for Georgina Powell who fell ill with typhoid. Margaret Payson travelled with Rev. Dickey to a hospital at Grand

Forks. Conditions there were worse than at Dawson, prompting Nurse Powell to report:

> Of the hardships and privations this nurse endured in this hospital during her six weeks of service, I can only say that they were many, and almost degrading enough to make one doubt the 'blessedness of drudgery.'

For the nurses, the drudgery seemed never-ending, but their devotion earned them the gratitude of patients and praise from officials. In a report dated 19 March 1899 forwarded to Ottawa by Sam Steele, Assistant Surgeon W.E. Thompson said:

> ... the members of the Order, at present in Dawson, have been able to render great service to the suffering and sick in the city ... I must speak in the highest terms of the work done by these ladies in their self-sacrifice and devotion to their honourable calling.

Unfortunately, the nurses were not able to meet their objective of setting up a district nursing system. According to the Victorian Order of Nurses' annual report of 1898, it was impossible to raise funds for this purpose in Dawson City. Consequently, the nurses were attached to hospitals in Fort Selkirk and Dawson and, as the flood of miners dwindled, the need for their services diminished.

In 1900, Lady Aberdeen published a brochure entitled *What's the Use of the Victorian Order?* Its purpose was to defend her support of the VON, and in it she related some of the services the Klondike nurses had rendered, concluding with:

> One of them had to leave owing to a serious operation; one has been appointed Superintendent of a Hospital at Dawson with the consent of the Victorian Order. One has taken a position at the Post Office; and the District Superintendent, Miss Powell, remains at work till the spring allows her to be transferred to another post where her services will be more required in view of the great diminutions of the population of Dawson.

It was an anticlimactic ending to an adventure that had captured the public imagination. Nevertheless, the Klondike nurses had achieved an enviable victory, overcoming political and physical obstacles to bring essential medical care to the northwest. ◆

Cheryl MacDonald has written a number of books, including Who Killed George? – The Ordeal of Olive Sternaman.

VON CANADA

EPILOGUE

The centennial of the Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada is being commemorated this year. From its founding in Ottawa in 1897 the Order has left Canadians a proud legacy. Today the non-profit organization has over 7,000 staff members, 9,000 volunteers, in a network of 71 branches across Canada. Present initiatives include home-based palliative care, home IV therapy, respite care, and health service in shelters for women, children and youth.

Part of the VON philosophy is that health service should respond to the expressed needs of individuals. The four nurses sent to the Yukon in 1898 would have approved. When Rachel Hanna found a sick soldier from the Yukon Field Force lying in a tent on low damp ground she asked Captain Bennett to have him removed. The response was that the colonel would never allow the soldier to be in anything except a bell tent. Hanna's retort was brief: "I'm responsible to the colonel for this man's recovery. I'll nurse him as I see fit." The soldier was moved.

This compassionate, dedicated and professional service is what is being celebrated this year. We congratulate the Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada as it enters its second century.

VON Canada 100 1897-1997

Canadians in the Spanish Civil War 1936–1938

The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Spain

By Lawrin Armstrong and Mark Leier

In November 1996, twelve Canadians returned to Spain after an absence of nearly sixty years. They left in 1938 as fighters in a lost cause and under threat of imprisonment at home. Now they were welcomed by the Spanish government and celebrated for the courage and selflessness they had displayed in the Spanish Civil War as members of the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of the International Brigades.

Between 1936 and 1938, they and nearly 1,500 other Canadians left friends, families, and jobs to oppose the Fascist rebellion of General Francisco Franco. While the Canadian government sought to appease Hitler and Mussolini, these men saw the insurrection in Spain as the beginning of a global struggle between oppression and democracy.

Why did the volunteers see the world in such stark terms? Part of the answer lies in the social and economic conditions they faced at home. In 1936, Canada, along with much of the industrialized world, was in the midst of an economic depression. Depressions were nothing new: they were an inevitable part of the market economy. But the depression that began in 1929 was longer, more severe, and more divisive than earlier collapses. Unemployment climbed to over 30 per cent in some years. Men looking for work rode boxcars across the country and huddled in makeshift hobo camps or "jungles" on the outskirts of cities. Ottawa and the provinces refused to address the issue, and the rudimentary welfare administered by the cities and towns was too small to help those who were out of work.

Canada seemed unable to look after its people: while some lived in luxury, others begged for food, lined up at soup kitchens, or toiled for pennies in relief work. Many turned to left-wing groups for solutions. The most radical and most significant was the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Though historians debate the role and nature of the Party, many Canadians in the 1930s supported its efforts to bring political pressure to bear on governments. The Party organized the unemployed and its membership grew during the 1930s.

By 1932, authorities were alarmed at the spectacle of tens of thousands of unemployed

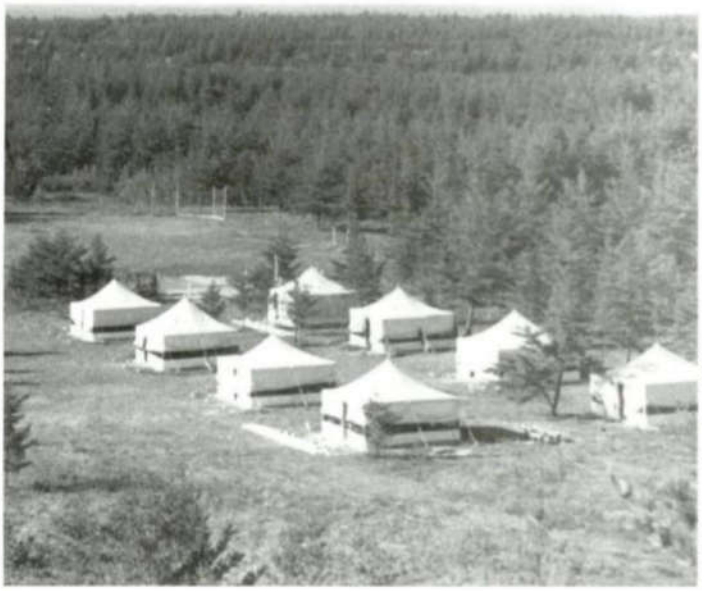
Vancouver Public Library, 35736

Relief Camp Workers Union Rally at Cambie grounds, Vancouver, for the 1935 May Day march.

Opposite: Manitoba miners, c. 1933.

Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Nestibo Fam. Coll. 24

Below: Work camps, Whiteshell Forest Reserve, Manitoba, 1937.



Provincial Archives of Manitoba, G.W. Malaher Coll. 30

massing in the cities, where left-wing organizers could mobilize them. To end the potential threat, R.B. Bennett's Conservative government created relief camps, where the unemployed would be safely contained under military authority. In four years, 170,000 men passed through the camps, performing hard manual labour, including road building with pickaxes and shovels, in return for room, board, and an allowance of 20 cents a day – about the price of a packet of cigarettes. Often camp workers were set to meaningless busy work that seemed designed to undermine the hope and dignity of the unemployed.

But instead of isolating the unemployed, the camps brought them together. Led by the CPC, they created the Relief Camp Workers Union (RCWU) and organized to fight back. The RCWU's most famous action was the On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935. The Trek organized thousands of camp workers and the unemployed into a mobile, disciplined protest group that decided to "ride the rods" to Ottawa to appeal directly for work and wages. When Bennett used the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to suppress brutally the Trek in Regina, many Canadians were convinced that the Prime Minister was indifferent to the plight of the unemployed and that fascism, already in the ascendant in Germany and Italy, was a real possibility in Canada.

Ron Liversedge, a veteran of the Trek and the Spanish Civil War, noted that the depression showed him what the triumph of fascism would mean for ordinary people:

> The terrible life of the Canadian unemployed during the depression of the thirties, the box cars, the flop houses, the demonstrations for relief, seeing the police clubbing men, women, and even children unconscious on the city street for asking for food, the twenty-cent-a-day slave camps, the On-to-Ottawa-Trek, all this had conditioned the men who volunteered to go to Spain to make the decision without much soul searching.

For men like Liversedge, events in Spain had an immediate resonance. There, at the height of the depression, the discredited King Alfonso XIII had been replaced by a republic that promised to improve conditions for workers and peasants who were the poorest in Europe. But two years of tepid reform were followed by a period of savage reaction. The oppression ended only with the general election of February 1936, when a Popular Front coalition of liberals, socialists, and communists defeated the right-wing parties.

This new government, however, was paralyzed by its narrow electoral victory and by disagreements between coalition members. At the same time, fascists and conservatives plotted to install an authoritarian regime modelled on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Finally, in mid-July, a round of political assassinations gave General Francisco Franco and other senior army officers the pretext they needed to begin their long-planned *coup d'état*.

The Fascists were initially successful in an arc of territory south and west from Navarra on the French border to the Straits of Gibraltar. But their early victories soon foundered. In the industrial heartlands – the Basque provinces and Catalonia – and in central Spain, including Madrid, the army revolt galvanized popular resistance and launched the very social revolution the conservatives had feared.

While the government stood by helplessly, labour unions and political parties took over local power and armed their own militias to defend the Republic. Within days, socialist and anarchist unions had crushed the Fascist rebellion in Madrid and Barcelona. Wherever the military rising was put down, workers and peasants created new forms of social organization. In Catalonia, workers took over factories and mills and ran them on socialist principles. Peasants in Aragon and the Levante occupied the estates of feudal landlords and organized farming in democratic collectives.

By the end of July, however, the Fascists were advancing on Madrid and Aragon. Columns of enthusiastic but poorly armed militia men and women rallied to save the Republican government and the social revolution they had made. In September, besieged by Franco, who had the support of German bombers and thousands of Italian troops, the Republic appealed for help. Little was forthcoming from the governments of France, Britain, the United States, and Canada. These nations were determined to reach an accommodation with Fascism, so they opted for "non-intervention" as the best way to appease Hitler and Mussolini.

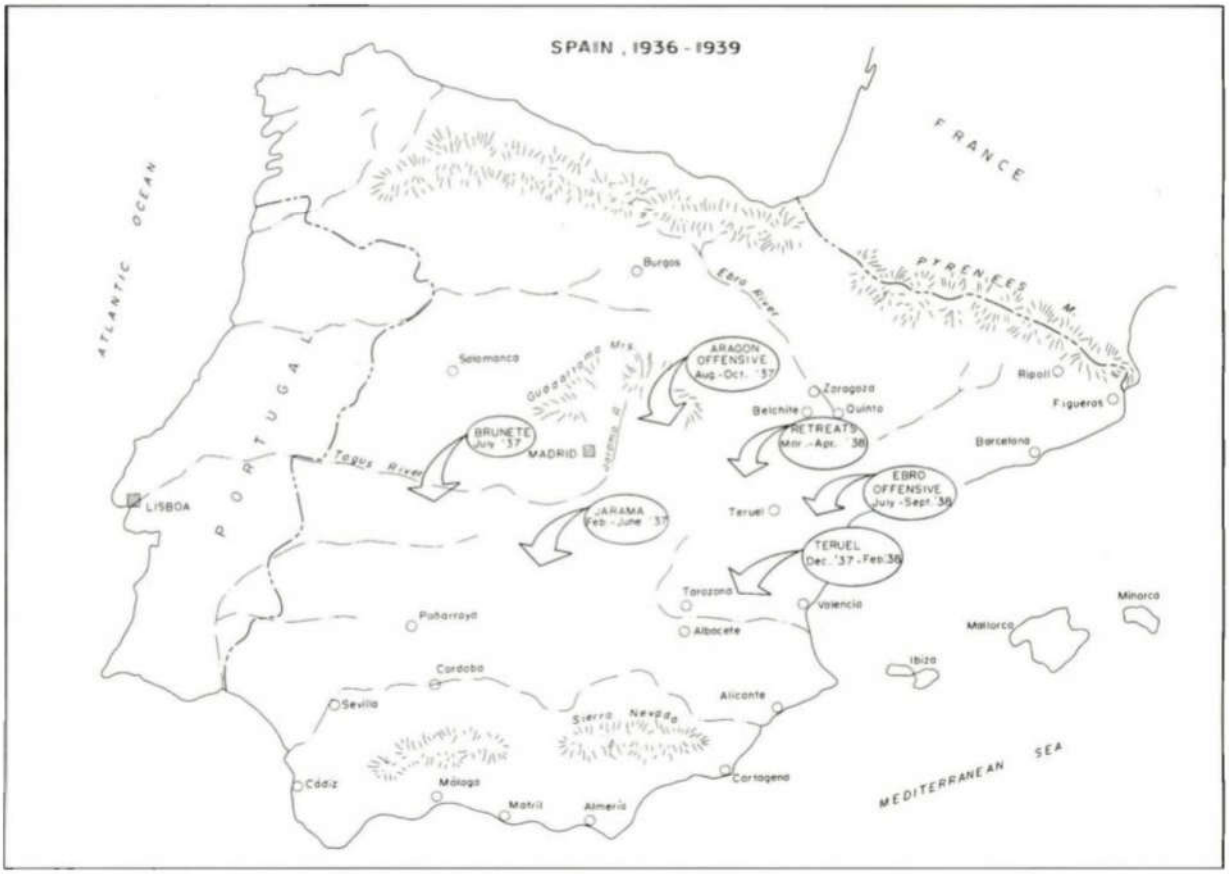
Only the Soviet Union was prepared to help the Republican government. Since it still hoped to unite with France and Britain against Nazi Germany, its official support was limited and conditional. But around the world local Communist Parties were able to tap popular sympathy for the struggle of the Spanish people. Rallied by the slogan of besieged Madrid, *No pasarán* – "They shall not pass!" – ordinary people mobilized to aid the Republic. The most visible support was the recruitment of some 40,000 international volunteers by 1938 for the Republican Popular Army.

In September, the Communist Party of Canada had started to organize relief and recruitment drives. The Party was astonished at the response. Expecting to send perhaps 250 volunteers, Party organizers were overwhelmed when thousands packed the meetings and hundreds tried to enlist. After France, Canada supplied more volunteers per capita than any other country. By January 1937, the first Canadians were on their way.

Who were the volunteers? They came from every region and represented Canada's diverse ethnic makeup. Recent immigrants and Canadian-born alike volunteered. Though the CPC was the chief organizer, recruits came from different political backgrounds. Fewer than half of the Canadian volunteers were Party members. Indeed, many opposed the heavy-handed authority of the Party in Canada and later in Spain. Some belonged to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), while many had no obvious political affiliation other than anti-fascism. They also came from different economic backgrounds. Norman Bethune, the best known volunteer, was a surgeon and academic; another was the son of a millionaire. But most were veterans of the depression. In contrast to the American and British contingents, which included significant numbers of artists and intellectuals, most of the Canadians were working class. Even Hugh Garner, later famous as an author, rode the rods before signing up for Spain.

Vancouver Public Library, 9442

Solidarity with Spain, Vancouver, 1938.



Map reproduced with permission of the Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina. This map first appeared in W.C. Beeching's "Canadian Volunteers: Spain 1936-1939".

There were other ways in which the Canadians differed from the rest of the English-speaking volunteers. More than half were between the ages of 30 and 40, making the group significantly older than those from other countries. Many had fought in the First World War, and others had fought in the Irish, Russian, and Finnish civil wars.

Canadian volunteers travelled first to New York, where they boarded ocean liners for Europe. Since it was illegal to travel directly to Spain, they told immigration authorities they were attending the International Exhibition in Paris. Once in France, they were smuggled into Spain, where they linked up with other international volunteers at Albacete, southeast of Madrid. The first Canadian volunteers were assigned to the mainly American Abraham Lincoln Battalion of the new 15th International Brigade.

In mid-February 1937, the still untrained Lincolns were thrown into the battle of Jarama Valley, south of Madrid. By the time the Fascist assault collapsed, the North Americans had suffered 75 per cent casualties, including three of the first Canadians to arrive in Spain. In the wake of Jarama, the Republicans set about reconstructing the shattered international units with new waves of volunteers. By late spring, about 500 Canadians were serving in three International Brigades and they agitated for the creation of a distinctly Canadian battalion. At the end of June, the rank and file of the 15th Brigade, against the indifference of the American staff officers, voted to establish a Canadian battalion. The new unit was named after William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis-Joseph Papineau, leaders of the 1837 rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada, who represented a tradition of democracy and popular protest against tyranny.

In August, while the remainder of the 15th Brigade was transferred to Aragon for an offensive against Saragossa, on the River Ebro, the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion remained at Tarazona, near Albacete, for training and organization. Here the volunteers learned the full meaning of the "non-intervention" of the democratic nations. Essential supplies such as uniforms, boots, and socks were scarce. Worse, the rifles and machine-guns supplied by the Soviet Union were in such short supply that they were issued only to men at the front. Trainees made do with a motley assortment of obsolete and broken weapons, including that notorious Canadian relic of the First World War, the Ross rifle.

The "Mac-Paps", as the unit was now popularly known, was transferred to Aragon in early

September and rejoined the rest of the 15th Brigade. On 13 October 1937, it saw action for the first time as an independent unit in the assault on the fortified town of Fuentes de Ebro, located about mid-way between Saragossa and Quinto. The plan was for the Mac-Paps and the Lincolns to follow Russian tanks across a mile of open plain to the city walls. But the terrain proved too rough for the tanks and they were withdrawn. Left exposed to murderous machine-gun fire from the Fascist lines, the Mac-Paps dug in and stubbornly held their position for two weeks. By the time they were relieved, they had suffered 260 casualties, nearly half of their complement of 625. Ron Liversedge reflected on the disaster and noted that:

> It was becoming more difficult to face the overwhelming superiority in arms which the fascists were building up....The men were in poor physical shape and in a sullen mood, knowing that the Aragon phase of the war was by no means over. As always, when out of the line, the boys complained, cursing the staff, the lack of food, and wondering when the people back home were going to move and force their governments to lift the blockade....It could not be stated that the Fuentes action was ill-conceived, but I am quite sure that it was the most ill-directed action on our part in the whole Spanish war....We ran into a murderous fire and the men started to drop all around. In less than fifteen minutes our company strength was reduced by half. There was no cover.

After Fuentes, the Mac-Paps received new officers. Command went to Edward Cecil-Smith, a journalist from Toronto. The new political commissar, responsible for morale and explaining the objectives of the war, was Saul Wellman, a truck driver from New York. The third company was commanded by Lionel Edwards, an unemployed accountant from Calgary, and the machine-gun company by Niilo Makela, a Finn from Timmins.

In January 1938, the reorganized Mac-Paps were deployed west of Teruel in southern Aragon. Conditions were terrible: blizzards dumped a metre of snow on the battlefield and sub-zero temperatures froze guns, trucks, and ill-clothed men in the trenches. The Fascist attack came on 17 January. After three days of heavy shelling, the Mac-Paps were forced to fall back. The entire 15th Brigade was pulled out at the end of January and sent south to recuperate, only to be rushed back when the Fascists broke through the Republican line in mid-February. For three days, the exhausted units fought to stabilize the line at

National Archives of Canada, PA-194600

Thomas Edison Beckett, the first Canadian casualty.

National Archives of Canada, C-67468

Captain Saul Wellman.

Segurao de los Banos, 75 kilometres north of Teruel. When they were finally relieved on 19 February, the Mac-Paps could muster only 200 men. Teruel had been a disaster for the Republic: over 1,000 square kilometres of territory had been lost and 20,000 troops were dead.

Retreat followed disaster. On 9 March, Franco began a push south to the Mediterranean. Over the next three weeks the Republican army of 35,000 disintegrated as it retreated 160 kilometres to the Ebro River. The Fascists pursued them relentlessly with the modern trucks and dive-bombers supplied by Italy and Germany. On 1 April, the remnants of the 15th Brigade, including some 200 Mac-Paps, were drawn up for a last stand at Gandesa. Demoralized, outnumbered, and out-gunned, the brigaders could offer little

National Archives of Canada, PA-193629

The Mac-Paps parade as a unit for the last time at Marsa, October, 1938.

Below: In the trenches at Teruel.

National Archives of Canada, C-67469

more than token resistance. Within a day, Gandesa had fallen and the shattered Internationals were streaming to safety east of the Ebro.

Once again the Internationals regrouped. Together with 77,000 Spanish troops, they launched a final, desperate offensive across the Ebro River to relieve the pressure on Madrid, now cut off from the rest of the Republican zone. For once, the Fascists were unprepared. In the first hours of the campaign, thousands of rebel troops were taken prisoner. By the next morning, the Mac-Paps had advanced 20 kilometres to Corbera, within sight of their objective, Gandesa.

But here they were pinned down. After ten days of fruitless assaults, the Internationals were redeployed to the south. By now the offensive had deteriorated into a grim struggle to maintain the Republican foothold on the west bank of the Ebro. Throughout August and September the Internationals endured bombardment and ferocious counterattacks to hold their positions. Frank Thirkettle of Toronto was one of the many wounded:

> Suddenly I felt a terrific blow on my left arm that turned me completely around and down. A bullet had broken my arm....Observing that a few yards away I could get under cover, I got to my feet and attempted to run. Barely had I taken a few steps and Whang I was hit through the upper part of the leg and down I go. It was terribly hot and I became terribly thirsty. Reaching around for my water bottle, I had just finished the little drop that was left in it, when it went flying through air and the fascists commenced target practice on me, hitting me again in the other leg.

The ordeal finally ended on 23 September 1938. On the mistaken understanding that Franco would do the same, the Republican government announced the repatriation of all foreign volunteers and the International Brigades were withdrawn from the line. Their casualties had been terrible. Of the Canadians, half of the approximately 1,500 volunteers were dead or missing in action. Among the survivors still in Spain, only 35 were able to march to the rear. The rest were dead, injured, or prisoners in Franco's jails.

They had fought for democracy, only to find themselves abandoned by the democratic governments of the west. One survivor, Canadian Ainslee (Lee) P. Burke, summed up the agony of the Republicans and Internationals as they fought desperately against all odds:

> We never did have the forces, planes, artillery, tanks to continue the offensive. Our offensives were only to distract and throw off balance the attacks the fascists were planning. We could only attack by surprise, take so much territory, prisoners, guns – and then try to hold on against their counter-attacks, never having the forces necessary to continue ahead for any

AIDEZ
1FR
L'
ESPAGNE
Dans la lutte actuelle, je vois du côté fasciste les forces périmées; de l'autre côté le peuple dont les immenses ressources créatrices donneront à l'Espagne un élan qui étonnera le monde.
Miró.

HarperCollins Publishers, London

This poster "Help Spain" by Joan Miró has the following message:

In the current struggle, I see on one side fascism with its old forces; on the other side the people whose extraordinary creative resources will give Spain a vitality that will stun the world.

National Archives of Canada, PA-194606

Above: Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion in Spain, 1937.

great length. After stopping their counter-attacks, we had to hold on and wait for the democracies to help us fight their first battles. We waited! But kept on dying and fighting.

The 15th Brigade paraded for the last time as an international unit in October, when the volunteers were replaced by Spanish recruits. At the end of the month 2,000 Internationals, including a handful of Canadians, were honoured at a farewell parade in Barcelona. Their battles and their pledge to fight on rang out in the song Viva la Quince Brigada (Long Live the Fifteenth Brigade):

Long live the Fifteenth Brigade,
Rumbala, rumbala, rumbala.
For her name is grand and glorious
Ay Manuela, ay Manuela!

We have only one desire
Rumbala, rumbala, rumbala.
Forever end the Fascist terror.
Ay Manuela, ay Manuela!

At Jarama we are standing
Rumbala, rumbala, rumbala.
And we have no planes above us
Not a tank, not any cannons, ay Manuela!

We have left the Spanish trenches
Rumbala, rumbala, rumbala.
To fight the Fascists where we find them
Ay Manuela, ay Manuela!

As the volunteers prepared to leave Spain, they were celebrated by the famous Communist leader Dolores Ibarruri, better known as *La Pasionaria*:

> Comrades of the International Brigades! Political reasons ... are sending you back, some of you to your own countries and others to forced exile. You can go proudly. You are history. You are legend. You are the heroic example of democracy's solidarity and universality. We shall not forget you!

Ordinary Canadians did not forget them. Committees were formed to aid the returning Mac-Paps, and thousands flocked to welcome them home at meetings across Canada. In Toronto, Reverend Salem Bland addressed a crowd of several thousand and told the volunteers that, "Canada didn't understand at first what you were doing, but understands now, and as time goes on, you will have more friends, more honour, because you have done one of the most gallant things done in history." In Vancouver, 31 veterans were greeted at the train station by a crowd of 10,000. Church and union leaders met them, and Mayor Lyle Telford saluted them, saying: "Your efforts were not in vain.... These people here tonight know that you have fought for them as well as for the Spanish people."

The federal government knew that as well. Its reaction, however, was to persecute the Mac-Paps. The Foreign Enlistment Act, passed in 1937 at the urging of the British government, provided for fines of $2,000 and imprisonment up to two years for Canadians who fought in Spain. Since Canada had not been officially at war, the men were not considered veterans and were denied benefits.

This hostility remained even when Canada declared war in 1939. Despite their military experience, many Spanish veterans were turned down when they tried to enlist. In a curious example of government doublespeak, the volunteers were labelled "premature anti-fascists", as if it were appropriate to fight fascism only after August 1939. The label stuck, and during the Cold War, service in Spain was often cause for blacklisting and surveillance by the RCMP.

But Spain remembered. Last year it assembled the surviving veterans of the International Brigades to commemorate their efforts to save democracy. Perhaps it is time for Canada to do the same. They fought without official sanction, pay, or conscription, when too many governments, including our own, turned their back on the Spanish people in the name of *realpolitik* and cynical self-interest. Perhaps now, sixty years after their sacrifice, Canada can officially show its gratitude to these men of vision. ◆

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A Lady in the Gold Fields

By Stephen Usherwood and Elizabeth Usherwood

The Times of London Archives, 1.23 - Times Newspapers Limited

Flora Shaw.

> Flora Shaw, the aristocratic colonial
> expert of *The Times* of London ...
> crossed the White Pass dressed
> as a perfect English gentlewoman,
> her skirts of ladylike length,
> her hair neatly coiled, and
> her neckpiece carefully fastened.
>
> Pierre Berton,
> *Klondike, The Last Great*
> *Gold Rush 1896–1899.*

On 18 July 1898 a short Reuter news item in *The Times* of London, dateline Victoria, BC, 15 July, read:

> A steamer arrived here with the first consignment of this summer's Klondike gold amounting to nearly 1,000,000 dollars in value. The gold was shipped from Dawson on June 28 via Lake Bennett and Skagway. The estimate of the wash-up varies from 12m. to 30m.

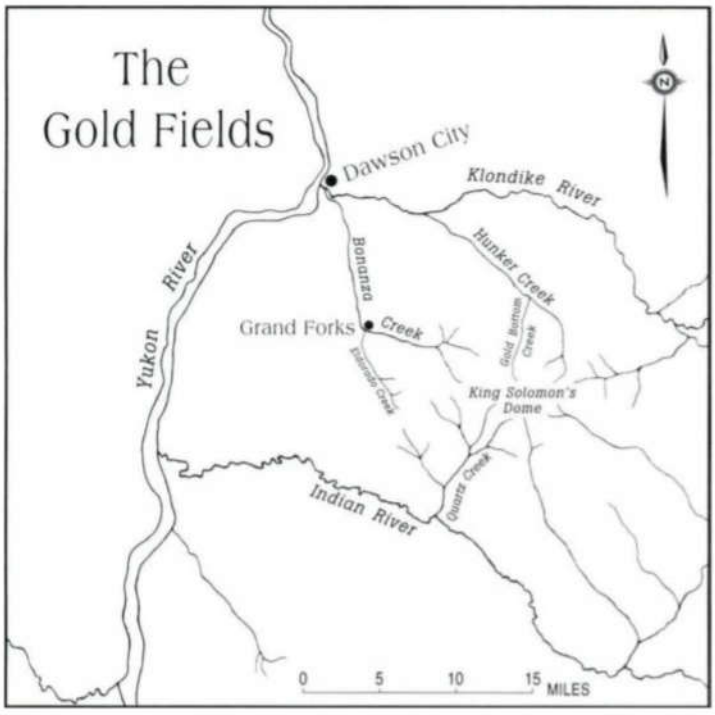
On 10 August *The Times* carried another short paragraph, headed "From Our Own Correspondent", dateline Dawson City, 23 July, beginning:

> I reached Klondike this morning completing the journey from London in 31 days. The time includes four days' accidental delay on the rivers.

Contributors' names were not normally printed by *The Times*, so few were aware that this message had been sent by a then rare phenomenon, a woman journalist of considerable experience, no less a person than Miss Flora Shaw, who had represented the paper in Canada in 1893, and in South Africa two years later.

As special correspondent on colonial affairs since 1892, Flora worked closely with C.F. Moberley Bell, *The Times* assistant manager, so when stories of wild behaviour in the mining camps, drinking, gambling, prostitution, thieving and murder, filled the popular newspapers and magazines, he determined to obtain accurate information, and thought immediately of Flora, sending her a handwritten note (of which a letter-book duplicate is now in the paper's archives), dated 9 February:

> My dear Miss Shaw,
>
> I am quite willing to let the *Daily Mail* and others have all the Headline glory of special correspondents, of graphic descriptions and of pen pictures, feeling pretty confident that anything that is worth publishing in that way will come to us from volunteers – Among others, Mr E.G., who may be trusted to write with conscientious dullness on any subject, will offer some –



> If I knew personally of a mining expert, whose opinion one could trust and of whose honesty one could be sure, I should then think it worth while considering the advisability of sending him out, but meanwhile I have refused all the O'Briens and O'Bourkes who have volunteered to "make copy" at varying prices per line.

How had she managed to make such a stupendous journey in 31 days? Only *The Times* was capable of obtaining for its representative a welcome as cordial and helpful from Canadian government officials as Flora Shaw had received on landing from her transatlantic crossing. The Canadian Pacific Railway, which had opened through services to Vancouver only twelve years earlier, performed its part well, allowing her an hour off in Winnipeg to have an inflamed tooth extracted by a dentist who had been warned by telegram from Montreal to be ready to attend her. On arrival in Vancouver she found the weekly steamboat had delayed sailing on its 900-mile coastal voyage north to Skagway to wait for her. *The Times* had sent a telegram requesting the captain not to sail until Miss Shaw was aboard. On the train she had met a Klondiker with a farrago of information to share. He insisted that the record for a journey from Vancouver to Klondike and back was 90 days, twice as long as she had planned. Although doubting this, she reluctantly decided not to make any detour on her outward journey, and, in deference to his stories, she bought canvas leggings to wear under her skirts for protection against blows and scratches, and, as a defence against mosquitoes, a beekeeper's outfit. Perhaps this expedient was reminiscent of her cottage near the Surrey village of Abinger, a paradise for bees, and by the scent of Canadian wild clover that blew in through the train window. Her enthusiasm for the trees and flowers in their June glory is infectious:

> For a thousand miles the railway track lay through wild roses of every tint from palest cream to crimson. Wild lavender accompanied them in great quantities with red columbine and spiraeas, white and pink. A handsome pale yellow cactus was also abundant and the gaillardia of the English flower gardens grew like buttercups in the grass.

Skagway, the primitive port to which Flora Shaw sailed from Vancouver, was on disputed territory. Canada and the United States had conflicting claims under old treaties drawn up by negotiators ignorant of the mineral resources of the countries they were parcelling up. Rich gold deposits were discovered at Eldorado and other creeks, and when George Washington Carmack with two Indians, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, struck gold on Rabbit (renamed Bonanza) creek in 1896, the exact location of the American border became of great financial and political importance. The Yukon, one of the longest rivers in North America that was navigable in summer along 1,700 miles, flows northward into the Bering Sea, and the Alaskan border, drawn right through the river basin along line of longitude 141°, left Dawson in Canadian possession, but further south the United States claimed a strip of rugged coastline as far as longitude 131°. Here the fir-covered slopes of mountains 5,000 to 6,000 feet high dip steeply into the sea. From the valleys glaciers force vast masses of ice into the water, where they break off with a sound like thunder and float southwards on the warm Japan current. Describing the scene for *The Times*, Flora wrote:

> The land is, as a rule, without sign of human habitation, although whales, seals, walrus, sea eagles, wild duck, geese and puffins abound. The general colour is a somewhat ghostly grey. Grey, still sea, grey mountains, pale grey sky above. At times the *Aurora Borealis* lights the scene with magical effect.

After landing at Skagway, she still had 600 miles to travel, first making her way over the coastal range and down to Lake Bennett, to board the Dawson steamer. The pass was high and the

track steep. Before leaving London, her dearly loved sister had been very anxious for her safety, and Flora, to reassure her, had written:

> What *The Times* has sent me for is to send them good letters. If I were to allow myself to come to grief either through exposure or violence, they would get no letters; therefore my plain duty is to take excellent care of myself. They have not gone to the expense of my journey for the purpose of leaving my bones in Canada.

The steamer is very small, merely a rough wooden box for the machinery with a deck overhead. There are four small cabins just above the boiler on this deck for the use of the crew, otherwise no accommodation of any sort, sanitary or otherwise.... Just as many passengers are taken as can find standing or sitting room. Food is served on a dirty oil-stained table in tin plates, which may or may not be clean, amongst the machinery and the freight with smells of oil and steam and unwashed humanity. The food itself is such as you may

Lake Bennett where the White Pass and Dyea Trails converged.

Univ. of Washington Libraries, Spec. Coll. Curtis 46123

Below: Front Street, Dawson, 4 July 1899.

Dawson City Museum, Lindeman Coll. 984.47.2

On her journey across the mountains she reached a "hotel" at the top of the pass. This was nothing more than a hut with bunks built against the walls and was so smelly that she preferred to sleep out of doors. Accommodation on the river boat was no better:

imagine; the first night, tinned salmon served with an accompaniment of hot current cake; since then, chiefly bad fish. I am the only woman on board and the captain, who has to be up all night, allows me to share his cabin, sleeping in it when he is not there. I have

Staking a claim, c. 1897. Credit: Dawson City Museum, R.J. Kennedy Coll. 982.202.34.

Miners at a sluice-box, c. 1899.

borrowed a galvanised iron pail and a tin basin from the cook and can just manage to shut myself in so as to secure privacy for a wash.

At last she got her first glimpse of Dawson; the buildings, being of peeled logs, appeared white, the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon rivers made the site swampy, and the initial impressions were bewildering. The steamer's arrival was watched by crowds of loafers with scarcely a woman to be seen. Working day and night, sawmills provided building timber, but no arrangements had been made for collecting refuse; it was just flung out-of-doors. The main street was a mere lane, along which passers-by had to pick their way between holes full of watery mud and piles of rubbish. The stench was so bad that one seemed to be "breathing poison all the time you walked". Yet the place was crowded with men who seemed to have nothing to do except stare at the shipping and quiz the new arrivals.

The best of the log cabins had the gaps between their timbers stuffed with moss and inside the walls and ceilings covered with white cotton and sheets of paper. The roofs were made of poles with about a foot of moss and soil thrown on top. The interior fittings usually consisted of no more than a pair of blankets, a wooden cot covered with a bit of canvas for a mattress, a light sheet-iron stove 12 inches by 24 inches and a few utensils of tin or aluminum. Some places possessed a table, but chairs were an unknown luxury. Tableware consisted of tin plates and tin mugs with a pail of water for washing up.

Somehow Flora acquired a handyman "for a mere four dollars a day", but what did that buy in Dawson City, where a glass of beer cost half a dollar and a bottle of champagne 40 dollars? Seeing her so travel-worn, he quickly rigged up a tent, strewing the floor with sweet-smelling spruce boughs and making a bed with them "as springy as a good spring mattress". Outside he set up a kitchen, a little table and stool, provided hot water for her toilet, and in the next few weeks produced "an astonishing variety of pies, curries, hashes and stews, hot cakes and bread".

She was soon out and about collecting information, relying on an extremely retentive memory, and writing up her material at the end of each day. The sheer length of her "letters" is amazing, but no matter how important the copy, the editor wasted little space on headlines, printing her despatches in column after column of small type. To introduce her first contribution, on 27 August 1898, there was a lengthy leader, beginning with an appropriate classical quotation, on this occasion from Virgil's *Aeneid*: *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, Auri sacra fames?* (Accursed craving for gold, to what do you not drive human hearts?), and going on to assert:

> It is not so long ago that Canada was regarded by a certain class of politicians as a troublesome dependency of no great value to the British Crown. Did such an idea linger still in the minds of Englishmen, it would be dispelled by such an account as we publish today.

There were two main sources of gold, the gravel lying underneath the top soil along the existing river banks, and then, as two Swedish prospectors discovered to their great profit, high up the hillsides along what, in a past geological age, had been the old banks. Shafts were sunk

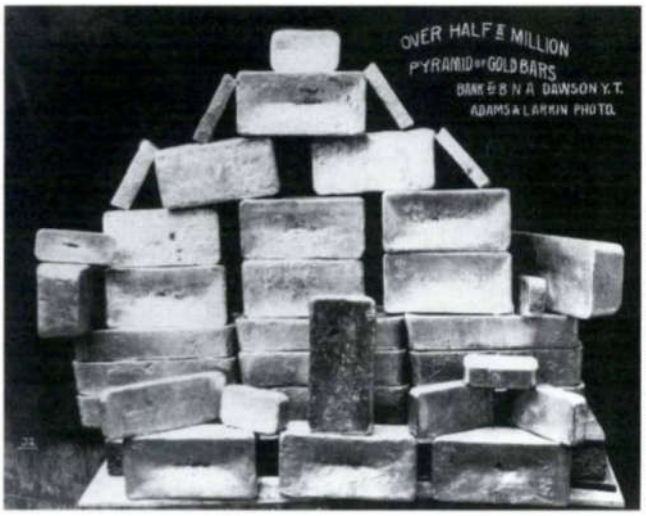
in the winter time, sometimes to a depth of 30 feet, the earth being defrosted with wood fires. No pit props were used; the exposed upper part of the shafts froze, and fresh fires were lit each evening at the bottom to loosen the soil for the next day's work. The pay dirt was raised in buckets and piled in heaps. In the spring it was sometimes washed back into the shafts by melting snow. The miners acknowledged having left more gold behind than they had taken out. For washing, wooden troughs with "riffles", or slats, fastened in the bottom were set on a slope and the dirt sluiced away, leaving the heavy metal caught on the slats. The wages paid for this sort of work were high; even the man who scrubbed stones with a brush to get the last trace of gold dust away was paid £2 a day.*

Pack men and animals carried the dust and nuggets down from the hills to Dawson, handling it with extraordinary carelessness. Flora saw one man with three mules bring in £24,000 worth in common sacks, covered with sailcloth, and tied with twine or leather thongs. Another, with £800 worth on a horse's back, did not know the owner's name, and there was no label on the sack, which was identified next morning because there was a small bag of nuggets inside a large sack of dust. The packers' work was paid at much higher rates in the summer, when tracks were deep in mud, than in the winter, when they were hard as iron, and sleds could be used. To await the packer the gold was stored in old tobacco canisters, empty fruit tins, or any other handy receptacle. One young Englishman, who had his wife with him, showed his total findings, throwing into a pan gold worth £3,500. The pair was living in the utmost squalor.

The miners spoke of two grievances, the Government royalty of ten per cent which they were expected to pay on their gold, and a new regulation bringing down the width of each claim, measured along the river bank, from 500 to 250 feet, and insisting that alternate claims should be assigned to the Government. This had not applied to the Bonanza and Eldorado finds, but new discoveries were still being made.

To estimate the value of the fields Flora made a two-day walk through the Eldorado and Bonanza diggings and took a dozen samples from widely separated points on the creeks and hillsides. The result varied from half a dollar to six dollars a pan. Three pans went to two dollars each and one to three dollars. With gold at 16 dollars an ounce, her samples showed the equivalent of 10 ounces to a ton of dirt. Her conclusion was that, when so much could be found on a stretch of several miles with a proved width of 40 to 45 feet, "there is an end to scepticism about the existence of gold in the country. If, with the labour of 4,000 to 5,000 men, the Klondike fields have produced from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000, this result is in itself enough to deserve the attention of the business world." Her judgement was confirmed in November of the same year when rich new placers (deposits of alluvial gold) were

Below:
Gold bars, c. 1901.



Dawson City Museum, John Gould Coll. 994.279.58

Kinsey & Kinsey / National Archives of Canada, PA-168973

Above:
Sluicing for gold attributed to Grand Forks, Y.T., c. 1900.

*The exchange rate of the British pound in 1898 was $4.87 Canadian.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives, PAM

Dawson City Museum, John Gould Coll. 994.279.56

Top:
Pack train on Cheechako Hill, Y.T., c. 1898.

Below:
Sluicing for gold on Bonanza Creek, c. 1899.

discovered on the Thistle and Blueberry creeks.

Yet behind the outward appearance of her highly professional journalism was a revolutionary spirit. The daughter of a Major-General and his French wife, and the granddaughter of a Recorder of Dublin, she had, in her Dublin school days, identified with royalists and Jacobites, until one afternoon, reading Carlyle's *French Revolution*, her outlook had completely changed. The wild romanticism of his style aroused in her passionate sympathy for the French whose sufferings had led them to overthrow tyrants and disrupt whole kingdoms in the pursuit of liberty. This had predisposed her to support the gold miners of the Rand, who were denied voting rights. Now she sympathized with the grievances of the Klondike miners. One of them said to her:

> You may ask me anything you like. When I don't want to tell you, I shall lie. That is how we manage. The Government has made perjurers of us all.

In one short passage at the end of a long letter she criticized the Canadian government:

> It is deplorable to have to admit, but idle to ignore, the fact that the administration of the Klondike district, and the relations which exist between the Government and the public, leave almost everything to be desired. The population remains on the whole orderly and law-abiding. There is a widely prevalent conviction not only that the laws are bad, but that the officers through whom they are administered are corrupt.

This, coming from *The Times*, gave considerable offence. The press generally had built up a much more unpleasant picture of Dawson City than Flora had done, representing "the starving miners" as the victims of racketeers. No sympathy was shown for a government faced with a sudden flood of immigrants, many of them undesirable, who had chosen of their own free will to plunge into a remote and uninhabited waste where the annual variation in temperature might range from 80°to -80°F. No one should have been surprised that the best type of Canadian civil servant was unlikely to volunteer for a posting to the Yukon.

In 1898 the population of Dawson City was 25,000, but by 1910 most of the inhabitants had left, and Dawson became, like so many former mining centres in the United States and Australia, a ghost town. The great paddle steamers that had once sailed the Yukon were left to rot at their moorings.

Two years after Flora Shaw's return to England the mountains round Skagway were shaken by an earthquake and the great ice wall, three miles long and 300 feet high, presented to the Pacific by the Muir glacier, collapsed with a mighty roar into the silent sea. But today, thanks to the Alaska Highway, thousands of tourists are able every summer to visit the spectacular landscapes through which the miners passed on foot and boat to the diggings. None who sees the few log cabins and pieces of primitive equipment that remain can fail to admire the fortitude of those who crossed oceans and continents to penetrate so wild a country in the hope of one lucky strike. ◆

Stephen and Elizabeth Usherwood live in London. He is a former B.B.C. producer and has written 13 books. Elizabeth Usherwood is a former banker and has written five books.

In a leaky shack, made from dismantled dories, E.A. Hegg set up his studio in Dyea.

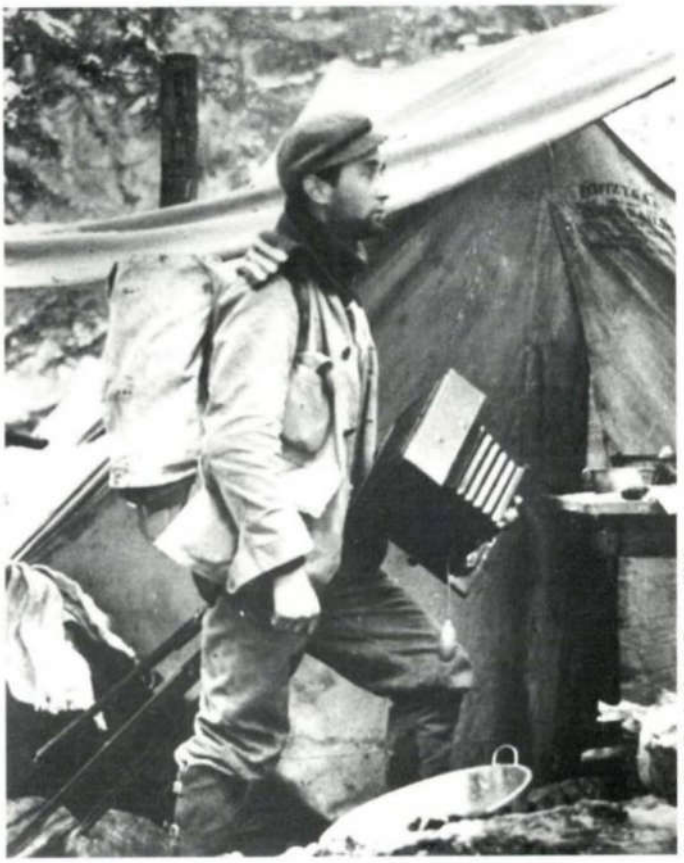
Photo Nuggets: Klondike Photographers

By David Mattison

Once viewed, the photographs are rarely forgotten. The gaunt, gold-possessed faces of men paused in early struggle along the Dead Horse Gulch portion of the White Pass Trail outside Skagway, Alaska. The line of gold seekers stretching up the Chilkoot Pass on the way from Dyea, Alaska: black specks at the top, recognizable human shapes at the bottom, all against a vast expanse of snow and rock. And finally, the miners themselves, posed awkwardly, shyly, defiantly or grimly with shovels, pickaxes and, at first, none of the comforts of home. While the determined faces of the stampeders are plainly visible, those recording their struggles and successes are often not. Thousands of photographic negatives and prints survive with names scratched, erased and added to show ownership: Winter & Pond, Frank La Roche, Asahel Curtis, E.A. Hegg/Hegg & Larss, and Larss & Duclos are among the professionals whose images illustrate the earliest guidebooks, magazine articles and autobiographies of those who went to the Klondike.

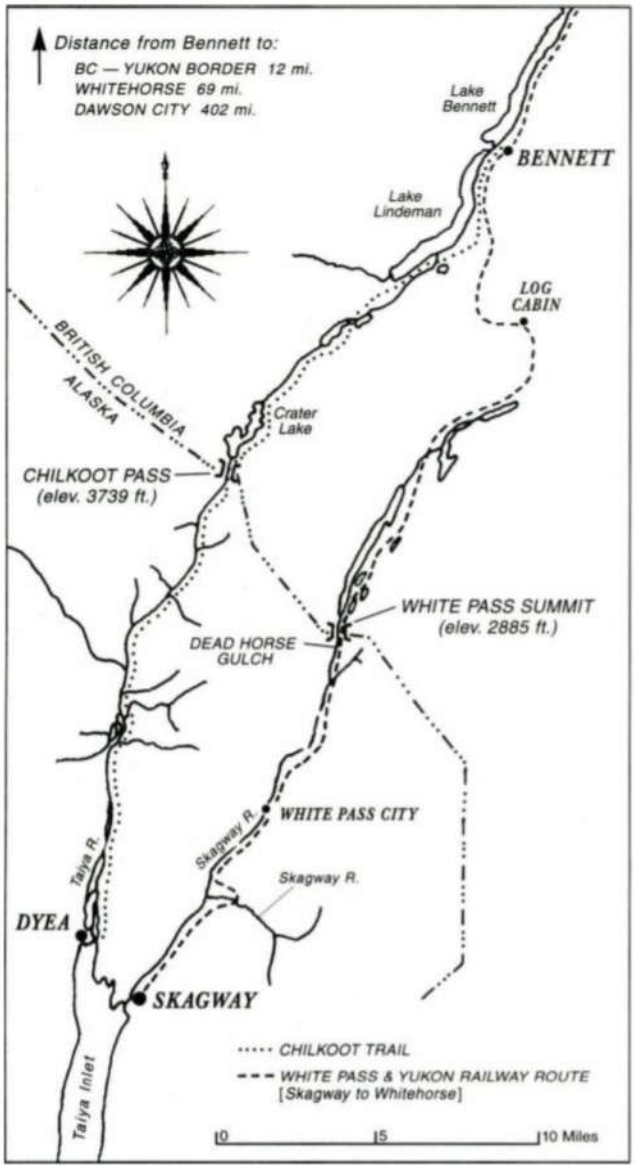
These photographers, as well as a number of journalists with cameras, voyaged with the Klondike stampeders. Their compelling images, designed to sell themselves, are preserved primarily in North American archives and libraries. Many more amateur photographers also captured aspects of the gold rush, particularly the family and business life of permanent Yukon residents, that would not interest most commercial photographers. The centennial of one of the last intentional mass migrations marks an appropriate time to consider the faces and stories behind an extraordinary visual record. To date the collective story of the men and women who photographed the gold rush remains untold.

For a photographer, the Klondike Gold Rush could be a rewarding opportunity, just as it was for other skilled trades, merchants, professionals and con artists. Yet just as stampeders turned back or lost all through accidents, the dreams of fortune imagined by photographers could be shattered or lost and photographic equipment abandoned as useless deadweight. Unlike the average miner, however, or even a prosperous entrepreneur, a commercial photographer was assured some measure of immediate recognition. Most professional photographers branded their negatives with typeset labels or hand-printed captions and signatures. Unlike the thousands of anonymous residents living beside their claims in tents and cabins, or in permanent communities such as Dawson, Whitehorse and Grand Forks, a photographer, even an amateur one, who labelled negatives was assured a measure of immortality.



Asahel Curtis.

Although Alaska and the Yukon were still considered *terra incognita* as late as the Klondike Gold Rush, the area surrounding the Klondike River gold fields and the routes into the interior from Alaska and British Columbia were well known prior to 1897. Historians have noted that the existence of gold motherlodes in the Yukon was



the goal of prospectors and miners since 1881. A few artists and photographers, including Frederick Whymper and United States Army explorer Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka, had already visited the Yukon interior. Sitka and Wrangell, along with the natural attractions of Glacier Bay and Muir Glacier, were familiar through books, the popular press and stereographs (3D photographs).

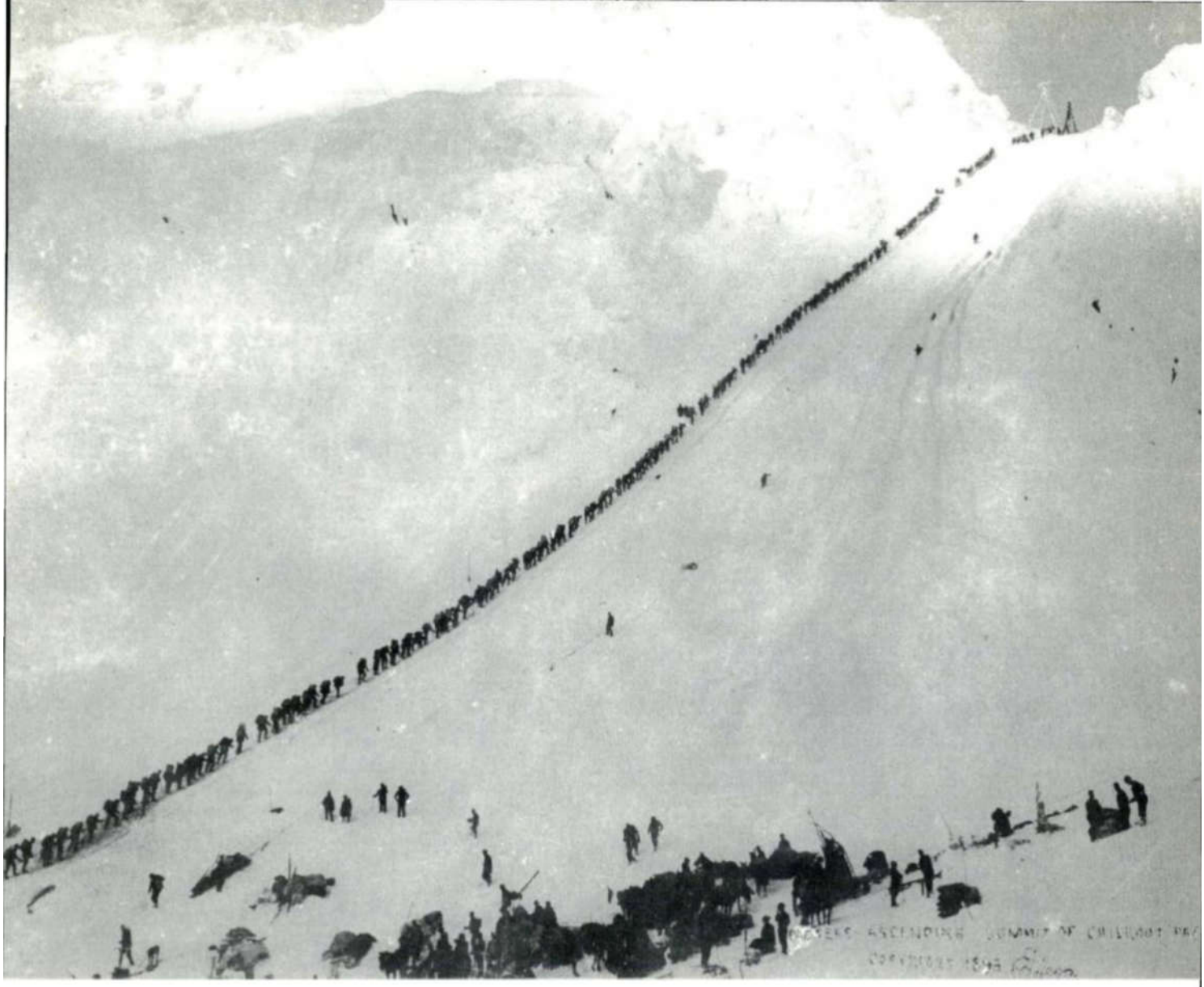
On 16 June 1897 when the *Excelsior* loaded with gold and happy miners reached San Francisco from St. Michael, Alaska, hundreds of views of the Pacific Northwest Coast from Seattle to Skagway and probably several dozen images of the Yukon interior were already in circulation. These were taken largely by amateur photographers.

Despite the half-century partnership of Lloyd V. Winter (1866–1945) and Edwin Percy Pond (1872–1943) in Juneau, Alaska, they appear to have made only two or three trips to photograph the impact of the gold rush. Their first expedition was in the spring 1895 when they ventured along the Dyea (Chilkoot Pass) Trail as far as Crater Lake. They advertised Yukon views in a March 1895 issue of the *Alaska Searchlight* newspaper, possibly indicating a trip the year before. A more extensive journey was undertaken by both in the winter of 1897–98 also via the Chilkoot Pass Trail from Dyea to Dawson. Their most enduring and shocking images on this expedition concern the trial and punishment by whipping of a thief at Sheep Camp, 13 miles outside Dyea. In 1934 the firm published a commemorative album *Trail of '98 – Thirty-six Years Ago*. Almost two years after his partner's death, Winter transferred ownership of Winter & Pond in January 1945 to Francis J. Harrison, who continued to operate under that name until December 1956. Their earliest glass negatives are preserved by the Alaska State Library.

Veazie Wilson (1864?–c.1894) was the first photographer to be hired specifically to document the journey faced by gold seekers who were already heading north. Wilson and his wife Josephine, accompanied by the American theatre actress Esther Lyons (Mrs. Robinson) and her husband, travelled the Chilkoot Pass route in 1894 and navigated the 2,000-mile Yukon River to its mouth on the Bering Sea. Esther Lyons took notes from which Wilson was supposed to write articles for *Century Illustrated Magazine*, published in New York City. The notes, however, appear to have found their way to a book publisher in Seattle where they were printed with maps and photographs by Wilson as *Guide to the Yukon Gold Fields: Where They Are and How to Reach Them*.

Tragically, Wilson died just before the book went to press, victim of an illness resulting from his journey. Connections to other photographers of the Klondike Gold Rush make Wilson of even more interest today. The firm which processed his photographs for the guidebook was Curtis & Guptill, the first being Edward S. Curtis, later renowned and today somewhat tarnished for his portrayal of the "vanishing race" of North American Indians. From an ethnographic point of view his photographs are no longer regarded as reliable evidence of their subject matter. In 1900 Curtis bought Frank La Roche's studio. La Roche appears to have retained his negative collection and this is now at the University of Washington.

Frank La Roche (1853–1934) reputedly made over 100 trips to Alaska in a twelve-year period beginning in 1890. La Roche's own pictorial



album with extended captions, *En Route to the Klondike*, was likely patterned not only on Wilson's 1895 guidebook, but also on the memorial album *Glimpses of Alaska: A Collection of Views of the Interior of Alaska and the Klondike District* edited by Esther Lyons. La Roche's photographic career literally stretched across the United States from Philadelphia to Seattle where he settled in 1889.

La Roche was in middle age when he left Seattle in early August 1897 to photograph the gold rush. He was probably the first professional photographer from Outside to duplicate the same harrowing journey as Veazie Wilson. He provides few details of his trip in the detailed captions to his album. While several of the photographs are dated, there appear to be inconsistencies, which led one photohistorian in a recent study of the album to conclude that La Roche may not have wintered in the Yukon or Alaska.

The question remains, however, where did the winter scenes in the Yukon and Alaska territories in the book come from, if not from La Roche's own camera? Did he purchase them along the way and copyright them in his own name? La Roche photographed a miner's camp near Skagway on 12 August 1897 and Skagway Harbor on 12 September, followed a month later by views of Skagway and Dyea. In between August and October he hiked the 21 miles over the Chilkoot Pass (Dyea Trail) to Happy Camp near Long Lake. He photographed Lake Lindeman in September. La Roche also attempted the Skagway (White Pass Trail) route, but did reach the White Pass summit.

Curiously, none of La Roche's images of this nightmarish White Pass route depict the deadly toll exacted by many callous, inexperienced miners whose actions led to a part of this trail being called Dead Horse Gulch. He probably returned to Dyea in October and went back to the

Chilkoot Pass, 1898. Photo by E.A. Hegg. National Archives of Canada, C-5142.

Univ. of Washington Libraries, Spec. Coll. Hegg 214

Alaska State Library, Larss, P.E., PCA 41-63

Top:
E.A. Hegg's sled, which is pulled by rams, advertises his photographs.

Below:
Larss & Duclos Studio, Dawson.

Chilkoot Pass where he photographed the steep incline in winter. His image is not as dramatic as Hegg's, for there are fewer miners climbing and the steep angle is not very evident.

About the time that La Roche was photographing in early September around Dyea, Skagway and along the two trails, a young man half his age, Asahel Curtis, set sail from Seattle on the *Rosalie*. Reputedly equipped with 3,000 glass plates (probably pre-sensitized gelatine dry plates) and financed by his older brother, Edward, Asahel Curtis thoroughly documented both the Chilkoot Pass route out of Dyea and the torturous White Pass trail running from Skagway.

Much as his chief competitor, E.A. Hegg, was doing at the same time, Curtis developed and sold his photos and portraits to the stampeders over the winter of 1897–98. Perhaps Curtis's most memorable images are of the scattered corpses along Dead Horse Gulch and exceptionally fine portrait studies of various miners at rest. Although Curtis was the equal of Hegg in terms of content and style, the former was unable to publish his own photographs because of a custody disagreement with his brother Edward. The problem crystallized early in their business relationship when Edward published an article on the Klondike stampede in the March 1898 issue of *Century Illustrated Magazine* and took credit for his brother's hard work. The dispute marred their relationship for the rest of their lives.

Asahel Curtis remained in photography until his death in 1941. A prominent and prolific Seattle photographer, he specialized in industrial and landscape photography through the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. Over half of the negatives he produced, along with 40,000 prints, between 1897 and his death are preserved by the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma. Business and personal records are housed by both the Society and the University of Washington.

The man whose name many would instantly recognize as the photographer of the gold rush was also part of the general stampede from Seattle. Eric Alexander Hegg, born about 1867 in Sweden and died in 1947, was raised in Wisconsin. He started in photography there under his own name as a teenager. Attracted to the Pacific Northwest, he settled in New Whatcom (today's Bellingham), Washington.

Like his competitors in Seattle, Hegg was quick to seize an opportunity on the gold trails. By the time he reached Seattle, however, he was too late for a ticket on a commercial vessel. Working with a group of other hopefuls from around Bellingham Bay, Hegg went aboard the sternwheeler *Skagit Chief* and safely reached Dyea, possibly in mid-September.

Hegg left few written and visual clues to his whereabouts, so there are discrepancies between various biographical accounts. His earliest chronicler, Ethel A. Becker, wrote in her tribute *Klondike '98* that Hegg first opened a somewhat rickety studio in Dyea. Hegg did not remain there long, for it was only a supply point, and he decided to relocate his headquarters to Skagway. Judging from his pictorial albums, *Souvenir of Alaska and Yukon Territory*, as well as photographs in several gold rush histories, he seems to have been constantly on the go between February and May 1898. Like Asahel Curtis, he took photographs of both routes out of Dyea and Skagway. Hegg, or his assistant, was present to photograph the aftermath of the Chilkoot Pass avalanche that struck on 3 April 1898, as was the Norwegian-born United States photographer Anton Vogee, who was in one of the aerial tramway buckets.

Hegg must have been well known on the trail, not only because he was a small, slight man with a sledload of equipment, but also because his

beasts of burden were goats. A banner on the side read: "Have you seen these views of Alaska? Photographs sent to all parts of the world. E.A. Hegg." He also at one point equipped a dory with a darkroom and sign advertising "Views of the Klondike Route Hegg." Another similar sign appears to have been painted on the sail.

Hegg's assistant, beginning in late March 1898, was Per Edward Larss (1863–1941), another Swedish immigrant to the United States. He joined Hegg in Skagway and in the field. Larss kept notes in a small daybook of their travels and during part of their partnership after they reached Dawson.

Larss & Duclos, who inherited or purchased two thousand Hegg negatives, kept their Dawson firm together until 1904 when Larss left, married in Denver, Colorado, then carried on photographing in Goldfield, Nevada, between 1905–1908 under the name P.E. Larson. He retired from photography that year. P.E. Larss's personal and business records as a Yukon photographer are preserved by the Alaska State Library. Glass negatives from the Hegg & Larss and Larss & Duclos partnerships are at the University of Washington.

Anton Vogee (1866?–1950) was another Nordic immigrant. He was a naturalized citizen

Summit of Chilkoot Pass, 1898. Photo: E.A. Hegg.

The Hegg & Larss partnership, formed on 26 September 1898, lasted until 1 April 1899 when Larss went into partnership with Joseph E.N. Duclos (1863–1917). During their brief union, the Hegg & Larss firm withstood a fire on 14 October 1898 that destroyed the studio. They moved to a new location on 27 February 1899 after Hegg had returned from the Eastern seaboard. The likely impetus for the partnership was Hegg's need or desire to publicize his images and perhaps attempt to find a publisher. Becker, who had the benefit of Hegg's memory, wrote that he made a "hurried trip to New York to the Eastman Kodak Company for more film. When pictures of Chilkoot, White Pass, nuggets and mines were shown in New York, the populace went wild. For days they fought for a sight of the pictures. Not until police arrived could order be restored."

of the United States and his photographic career was spent in Alaska, Northwestern British Columbia and the Yukon. His first studio was at Dyea in 1898. While primarily a sign painter and wallpaper dealer, he was able to capitalize branch photo studios at Atlin, where he lived for a year, Bennett and Pine City (Discovery) after travelling through the area in 1899. A branch studio at Pine City was managed by A.A. Garrison, whose name appears on a sign outside the business. Vogee then moved to Dawson, crossing the Chilkoot Pass on 7 August 1900 (boat 554), and working there until 1908 where he carried on photographing and selling signs and wallpaper. Although he returned to Norway with his family in 1908, he retired to Vancouver. The Yukon Archives preserves a large collection of his glass negatives.

Arthur C. Pillsbury (1870–1946) was a California commercial photographer whose

White Pass & Yukon Railway, 1899. Photo: E.A. Hegg.

travels through Alaska, the Yukon and British Columbia beginning in 1898 are as fascinating as those of his Seattle competitors. Travelling and photographing the many communities along the 2,000-mile Yukon River, he specialized in panoramic views, taking orders and payment if he did not have time to produce prints. Pillsbury used a camera with a moving lens of his own design, which he constructed at Stanford University in the early 1890s while enrolled in mechanical engineering.

One of the few British Columbia commercial photographers to travel with the stampeders was George William Edwards (1867–1944). He operated with his brother Edgar Herbert as the Edwards Brothers in Vancouver (1891–1920). Although primarily portrait photographers, G.W. Edwards photographed in the field. Four years prior to his trip across the Chilkoot Pass in winter he recorded the devastation of the Fraser River flood. In 1898 he travelled via the Stikine River Trail and a few photographs from his journey appeared in the August 1898 issue of the *BC Mining Record*. Prints from this trip are preserved at the Vancouver Public Library.

Charles Wesley Mathers was Edmonton's sole commercial photographer in 1897–1898, so any stampeder wishing a portrait had no choice. Ernest Brown, who purchased the business in 1904, estimated that Mathers took about 200 portraits of the 1,500 people thought to have used the Edmonton Route. Several of his outdoor portraits showing departing Klondikers were published in *The Nor'west Farmer* magazine and the London *Black & White* weekly. Mathers also offered a mail service for Klondikers, sending their 8 x 10 inch portraits anywhere in the world for a small sum. One wonders who received the portrait of a C.C. Crews. It shows him holding a revolver in his right hand and gazing off to his right behind a mound of furs and against a painted backdrop of a forested mountainside. Shoulder-length dark hair frame a confident, youthful face topped by a round-brimmed hat.

While a few amateur photographers created personal records of the stampede, the quality of their work is generally not as proficient as nor technically superior to that of the professional photographer. The candid scenes of Whitehorse barracks life, recorded by North West Mounted Police Sergeant Anderson's camera at the turn of the century, are but one example of the importance of the amateur. Professional photographers such as Atlin's S.A. Smythe (he was also the town sanitary officer) also recorded life on the inside of a British Columbia Provincial Police office/tent home in 1899.

While winter weather conditions in the Yukon

Klondikers from Chicago outfitting at Edmonton. Photo: C.W. Mathers.

Studio of Alfred Hirschfeld (1866–1926), an English immigrant who photographed in Alaska and the Yukon.

were often extreme, careful photographers were able to capture some extraordinary images. Among the photographic technological feats by Yukon photographers were an E.A. Hegg photograph of horse-drawn sleds and men waiting out a blizzard on the White Pass summit. Hegg also produced panoramas beginning in 1899 of Dawson and other locales with a panoramic camera and roll-film.

The Klondike Gold Rush coincided with another important technological event: the establishment of the moving picture industry. The American genius inventor and supreme tinkerer, Thomas A. Edison, while generally credited with singlehandedly creating the components for the industry, was in fact only one of several inventors, producers and distributors of projected film beginning in 1896. Earlier motion pictures were shown through individual devices called a kinetoscope which gave rise to the terms peep shows and nickelodeons.

It seems only fitting, in retrospect, that the world's last voluntary mass migration of people was documented by this new technology and displayed in carnival tents, outdoor stages, private halls and existing theatre buildings. By the time these extraordinary images reached the American East Coast public, the rush was peaking, so it is possible that film footage shot by Robert K. Bonine, a member of a Pennsylvania photographic family, may have inspired some and detracted others from joining the epic struggle to the new El Dorado. Bonine's footage is likely the only such representation of the gold rush in existence.

The initial years of the Klondike excitement produced in all likelihood the largest assemblage of photographs documenting any short-term event of the 19th century. Part of this cornucopia of images was due to advances in the technology: field cameras, though smaller and lighter, still required a tripod, yet glass negatives did not need to be developed in the field following exposure. The Kodak revolution of roll film and development service was also a decade old. The new technology of moving pictures, and even the older one of stereo photography, brought the Klondike stampede to life for those who could only dream of adventure. Photography was a skilled and often risky trade. Fires, floods and other accidents have wiped out some invaluable photographic negative collections. Even more images than were lost have survived as prints and negatives in institutions and private collections, so there is little fear that this visual legacy is in any danger. Commercial photographers, above all, were jacks-of-all-trades and relied on training and experience, as well as sturdy equipment and materials, to produce images that their customers would purchase and which we today still marvel at as photo nuggets of unparalleled value. ◆

David Mattison is a reference archivist with the British Columbia Archives and a leading specialist on 19th century British Columbia photography.

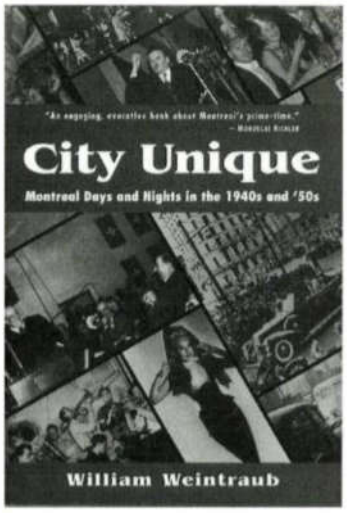
Acknowledgements

This author would like to especially thank photohistorians Michael Cirelli and Peter Palmquist, as well as the staff of the Alaska State Library, the Yukon Archives and the University of Washington Library, for their research assistance.

Wide-Open City

BY GAVIN MURPHY

CITY UNIQUE
Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s
By William Weintraub.
McClelland & Stewart, 481 University Avenue, Suite 900, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2E9, 1996.
332 pp., illus. $32.50.



Recent times have not been kind to Montreal. High unemployment, notoriously poor municipal services and a blighted downtown belie a once vibrant city.

Montreal's glory days may be a thing of the past, but they are brought back to life in William Weintraub's entertaining social history *City Unique*. Weintraub, a Montreal writer and producer who worked in the city during the 1940s and '50s, effectively captures the mood and imagery of those times. Whether describing the city's night life or simply gassing up the family car at the local Joy service station before a Sunday afternoon drive in the country, he paints a nostalgic portrait of a vibrant and exciting place.

What a city it was! On several occasions the author suggests Montreal was "wide-open". Wide open, that is, to gamblers, prostitutes, corrupt civic leaders and gangsters. At a time when drinking hard liquor in public was largely banned in other provinces, Montreal bars and clubs flowed with alcohol. Entertainment for thirsty and adventuresome patrons lasted well into the early morning hours.

The province of Quebec was under the iron fist of Premier Maurice Duplessis for most of this time. Police thugs ensured that many Montrealers remained poor and docile to guarantee political stability, labour peace and profitable Anglo-Scottish businesses. The Roman Catholic church was Duplessis's ally with communists, and "centralizers" in Ottawa his enemies. Even colourful mayor Camillien Houde, incarcerated by the Mackenzie King government for four years during the Second World War on questionable sedition charges, was powerless to stand up to Duplessis. The premier's long term in office ended with his death in 1959, ushering in the start of the Quiet Revolution.

City Unique opens with the Royal Visit of 1939 and essentially closes with Duplessis's death 20 years later. Sandwiched between these two events, Weintraub considers, amongst other things, the city's impressive war effort, Jean Drapeau's mission to clean up municipal politics, the infamous stripper Lili St. Cyr (actually an American from Minneapolis who didn't speak French), the works of famous authors like Hugh MacLennan, Mavis Gallant and Mordecai Richler and the emergence of jazz stars Oscar Peterson and Maynard Ferguson.

Weintraub takes the reader down memory lane by conjuring up long forgotten names. There is the Piccadilly Lounge in the Mount Royal Hotel, Rockhead's Paradise, the grand Chez Stien restaurant and the more pedestrian Bryson's Drug Store. There are Muir's meat pies, chocolate layer cakes from Woolworth's on St. Catherine Street and Taylor's fish and chips, wrapped in yesterday's newspaper. He quotes extensively from the old *Montreal Herald* tabloid newspaper. His description of growing up in working-class Point St. Charles is just as vivid as his images of the fashionable St. Andrew's Ball, held annually at the old Windsor Hotel.

Sport always played a big part in Montreal's life, but Weintraub gives short shrift to the legendary, powerful and much-loved Montreal Canadiens hockey club. The Habs of the 1950s won five consecutive Stanley Cups and are considered one of the best teams ever assembled. He also makes no reference to the Montreal Royals baseball team of the International League. Yet the 1946 roster included Jackie Robinson, who a year later broke the colour barrier and was the first black to play major league baseball.

City Unique is well researched, with an extensive bibliography and a good selection of photographs. Weintraub's flair for conjuring up the names of former city landmarks is quite remarkable. He knows his subject and writes with passion.

The 1940s and '50s were a gentler era in Montreal when the three solitudes – English, French and Jews – tolerated each other and mixed easily. It was an exciting period before the long decline as Canada's leading city and Weintraub captures both the good and the bad of this period.

Toronto's Bay Street eventually replaced Montreal's St. James Street as the nation's business address and Rosedale eclipsed Westmount as the neighbourhood of Canada's elite. Montreal never reached its projected population of 7,401,500, but in its prime the city was Canada's largest, richest and most cosmopolitan.

City Unique reminds us that Montreal was, during its heyday, truly a city unique.

Ottawa lawyer Gavin Murphy was born in Montreal.

Salmon, Flour, Butter and Potatoes

BY HARRY W. DUCKWORTH

TRADING BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS
The British Fur Trade on the Pacific 1793–1843
By Richard Somerset Mackie.
UBC Press, 6344 Memorial Road, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6Z 1Z2, 1997.
444 pp., illus. $75.00 hardcover, $29.95 paperback.

This book is an original account, splendidly researched, of a neglected period in west coast economic history. Most of the book is concerned with a period of slightly under twenty-five years, beginning just after the fur company merger of 1821 gave the Hudson's Bay Company control of the North West Company's sprawling fur trade operations west of the Rockies. It ends with the Oregon boundary settlement of 1846, by which the Columbia Department, the richest part of the Pacific domain, was assigned to the United States. George Simpson took charge of the Company's North American operations at the very start of this period, and proceeded to shape trading policies with masterful energy and three personal visits to that rich, mysterious country. On the Pacific coast he encountered challenges far beyond those presented by Rupert's Land – a settled and commercially sophisticated native population; competition from Russian fur traders in Alaska, from sea-borne Boston traders along the coast, and from St. Louis-based fur hunters inland; and a slow but increasing influx of settlers into the tributary valleys of the lower Columbia River. Mackie tells us how each challenge was faced, and either repulsed or turned to the Company's advantage.

The Columbia Department was so different in climate from Rupert's Land, and so exposed to competition from the sea, that the Governor and Committee considered abandoning it. Simpson headed off this timorous instinct and gave the district a new capital, Fort Vancouver, on a superior site. Aggressive measures were taken to repel the Americans. Trading vessels were sent to the northwest coast, concessions were obtained from the Russians, and new posts were built. Trapping brigades were sent inland – one up the Snake River valley, the other into northern California – to hunt the fur-bearers to extinction, creating a fur desert through which the American traders would find it unprofitable to compete. The most adventuresome Snake Country hunt descended the Colorado River to the Gulf of Mexico, a heroic voyage now almost forgotten because the journal was lost overboard on the way home.

But the surprising part of Richard Mackie's story is how much profit the HBC found in ventures unrelated to fur. The coastal natives traded salmon to the Company, and these were salted for export. Soon, native-grown potatoes were also being sold to the Company. Wheat was purchased from the settlers in the Willamette and Cowlitz valleys, and ground to flour in the Company's mill, while a Company dairy produced butter. Salmon, flour, butter and potatoes all found a market in Hawaii, where the HBC's agent sold provisions to the Pacific whalers. A timber trade developed, producing planks and spars that were also sold at Oahu – the Columbia lumberjacks were mostly native Hawaiians working on yearly contracts. The HBC traded hides and tallow in California, and opened a store on the site of San Francisco. Markets for salmon and lumber were tested at Monterey, Lima, and Valparaiso. Always the aim was to establish a systematic pattern of trade that could be exploited year after year. When the old-style fur trade finally crashed, about 1840, with overtrapping destroying supply, while in London a shift from beaver hats to the cheaper silk reduced demand, the diversification achieved on the coast helped cushion the blow.

The HBC could always drive off business competitors along the coast when it needed to do so. But George Simpson knew that political forces would eventually decide how much of his Pacific operations would end up part of the United States. It was in anticipation of losing the lower Columbia that he established a new depot at Victoria in 1843. When the Oregon boundary was settled in 1846, with Fort Vancouver well below the 49th parallel, Simpson's new depot was ready to become the nucleus of a new British colony.

Some parts of this story of the Hudson's Bay Company's business enterprises on the west coast have been told before, but the material is scattered; Mackie brings it all together, and tells us much that he has discovered himself. The research is admirable, drinking deep from the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, but also from other sources, old and new. The organization is adequate – it works better on the second reading than the first. There

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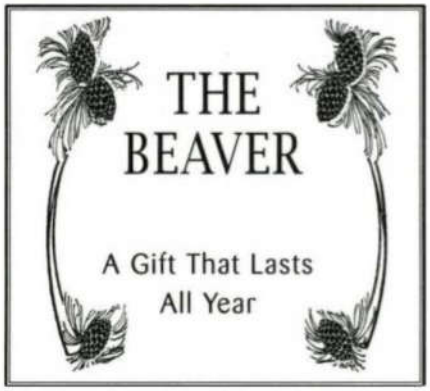
are places where a firm editorial hand would have been of benefit – the description of the salmon industry at Fort Langley, in Chapter 9, is similar to what has already been said of the same industry at Fort Vancouver in Chapter 8, for instance. The scale of the region under study, with parallel developments occurring in different parts, has tested the organizational ability, and sometimes the reader loses his way as geography and chronology mix, overlap, and diverge. The maps, while helpful, do not always deliver what one expects.

I also think that the book would have benefited from occasional character sketches – coherent accounts of the personalities, like George Simpson, John McLoughlin, or James Douglas, who carried out the Company's policies, or helped to formulate them – in the light of Mackie's new insights into the context in which they worked. And last, the events and processes that Mackie recounts are discussed so much from within their own time and place that the reader is left wondering about their larger significance. Did the Company's policies and practices on the Columbia and the northwest coast shape the fortunes of the natives and the early settlers, or give much direction to the later history of Oregon and British Columbia? Did they help shape the later Pacific trade, or were any effects swamped by the post-Gold Rush activity of the Americans? The processes Mackie describes so fully required much energy and imagination; but what exactly did they mean in the long run?

Harry W. Duckworth, a long-time enthusiast in the history of the Canadian fur trade, teaches at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.



Biographical Sketches

BY PAULA E. KIRMAN

LOBSTICKS AND STONE CAIRNS
Human Landmarks in the Arctic
Edited by Richard C. Davis.
University of Calgary Press,
2500 University Drive, NW,
Calgary, Alberta, T2N 1N4, 1996.
340 pp. $44.95 hardcover, $29.95 paper.

Landmarks are typically thought of as creations of nature, readily identifiable by travellers in need of help finding their way. In harsh and desolate environments like the Arctic, landmarks are especially necessary and often needed for survival.

However, landmarks don't necessarily have to be an outcropping of vegetation, rocks, or icebergs. According to Richard Davis, they can be human, too.

Davis is editor of *Lobsticks and Stone Cairns*, a collection of 100 short biographical sketches of some key players in Arctic exploration. Divided into 16 units, the biographies are grouped according to themes such as geographical locations and time spans. Many names recur throughout the book, allowing the reader to cross-reference and discover different historical perspectives.

The book's unusual title represents two of the various ways the explorers would mark their trails for others. One method was by lobbing off all of the branches of pines and spruces except for the topmost ones; another was by making little piles of stones found along the way.

Earlier versions of the biographical sketches were published in *Arctic Journal*, the publication of the Arctic Institute of North America, under the guidance of Davis. For *Lobsticks and Stone Cairns*, Davis had these profiles redone, adding illustrations, photographs, and maps. Included are such

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well-known figures of Canadian history such as William Edward Parry, along with lesser known names, like Matonabbee (ca. 1736-1782), a Chipewyan diplomat, trader, and explorer who led Samuel Hearne on his final and successful attempt to reach the Coppermine River.

However, there also appear to be glaring omissions, such as Henry Hudson. Davis explains such oversights in his Introduction, by saying that the book is not meant to be encyclopedic and comprehensive. Instead, *Lobsticks and Stone Cairns* is "intended to enhance our knowledge of the North." Therefore, Davis goes on to state that the individuals included in the book, "should not be considered benchmarks against which others should be measured, but as landmarks guiding the reader on this journey to increased familiarity with the North American Arctic."

Editing a collection of historical biographies seems a peculiar undertaking for a professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Calgary. However, this is not Davis's first foray into Canadian history. He has edited other books including a collection of essays on pre-Confederation Canada, as well as journals and correspondence from one of John Franklin's land expeditions. Indeed, Canada is a common link to most of the writing of Davis, who is originally from the American Midwest, and attended Indiana University prior to coming to Canada for graduate studies at the University of New Brunswick.

A hardcover copy of *Lobsticks and Stone Cairns* will be placed in every senior high school in Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. While the book has educational value, it is not just a textbook for the classroom. It is a chance for readers to explore vicariously an often misunderstood part of the world through the stories of these people's trials and triumphs.

Paula E. Kirman is an Edmonton freelance writer.

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The Philosophy of
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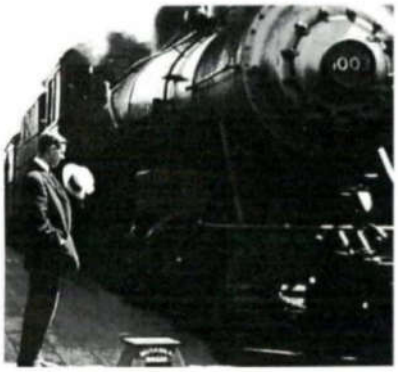

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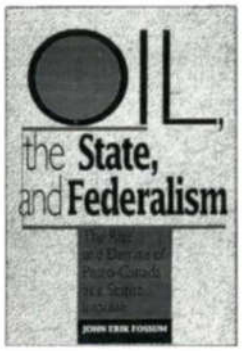

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Diverse Histories

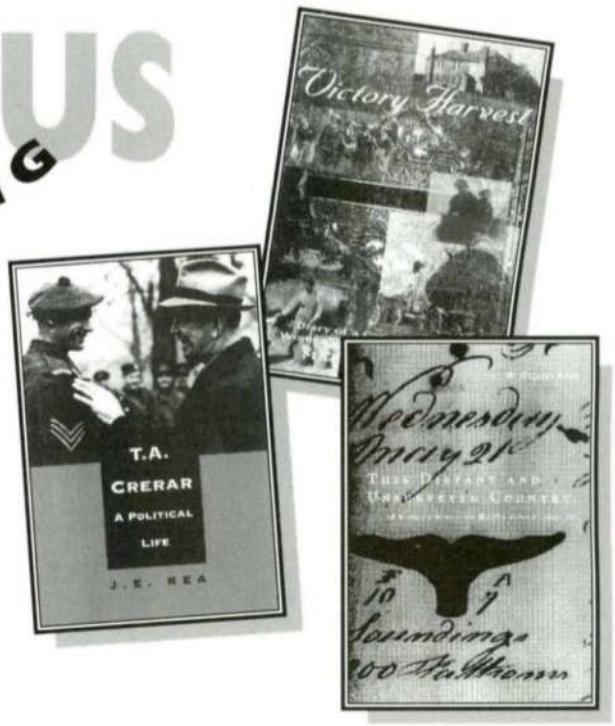
A noted Canadian historian was recently asked to recommend "a readable but serious volume on Canada" to be sent to two New Zealand history buffs about to visit our country. The historian declared that the "fragmenting" of the historical scholarship prevented his suggesting any single modern general history comparable to those of such past greats as Arthur Lower, Donald Creighton or W. L. Morton. Instead, he recommended some 15 books, along with the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, all 13 volumes. (Surface rate postage: $16.49 for 1.5 kilos! Are New Zealanders all speed readers?) Surely the visitors could read Desmond Morton's fine *A Short History of Canada* (the brand new third edition includes last June's election). Or *The Illustrated History of Canada*, even in its revised inferior softbound format, is a superior introductory work. Both books are available from *The Beaver* Book Club.

An entirely different glimpse, or rather glimpses, of our history is found in Stuart McLean's *Welcome Home: Travels in Smalltown Canada*. It was published five years ago, but I have only just read it. McLean immersed himself in each of seven small communities. His warmly personal anecdotes and reflections describe them as they are today, yet reveal how each continues to be powerfully influenced by its yesterdays. Here is a comprehensive picture of the enduring yet changing world of a Canada which is neither wilderness nor metropolis.

Until I browsed through Alan Rayburn's *Place Names of Ontario* (fully reviewed in the last issue of *The Beaver*) I did not know the word "toponym", the name of a place. A competing volume, *Ontario Place Names*, has just come out. It has half as many entries as the Rayburn work, but nonetheless it is fun to dip into. I have not seen the series of volumes on Alberta toponyms which the University of Calgary has been publishing. Publishers' catalogues tell me that an updated and revised edition of *British Columbia Place Names* is due out, as is a reprint of *What's in a Name: The Story Behind Saskatchewan Place Names*.

There is much Canadian history in the catalogues of books coming out in time for the Christmas season. Fifth House Publishers, continuing to produce worthwhile works on Western Canada, has a photographic history of

FABULOUS FALL READING



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cowboy culture, *Shooting Cowboys*, and a reprint of the classic account of homesteading on the Prairies, *Gully Farm*. I most want to see its new illustrated history of western railroads, *From Summit to Sea*.

Every *Beaver* reader will be eager to pick up Christopher Moore's *1867: How the Fathers Made a Deal*. I am also looking forward to *First Across the Continent*, describing Alexander Mackenzie's expedition. Barry Gough is a competent writer and historian, and the story of Mackenzie's hazardous travels and their international impact well deserves a modern telling.

Another Mackenzie is the subject of a biography written by Charlotte Gray. Isabel Grace was the thirteenth and youngest child of Isabel Baxter and the famous (or infamous, depending on your point of view) rebel William Lyon Mackenzie. Born while the family was in poverty and in exile in New York, she later had a genteel middle class education in Toronto before she married lawyer John King. Their second child grew up to become (as Michael Bliss has asserted) "Canada's most successful and most misunderstood prime minister." Happily this biography, *Mrs. King: the Life and Times of Isabel Mackenzie King*, focuses on the "strong-willed and ruthless woman" who reared Willie, not the spiritual presence cherished by him long after her death.

Another book on the fall list, one which ought to provide some fresh insight (and may stir old disputes), is *The People of New France*. Allan Greer has produced a brief survey of the social history of the century leading up to the Conquest. Although primarily centered on what is now Quebec, it also deals with French colonial society in Louisiana and Acadia. An old study just reprinted is *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*. When it first came out, this treatment of early French-Amerindian relations was described by one reviewer as "one of the most beautifully produced historical books" he had seen.

Now that the excitement of celebrations of Cabot's landing has died down, I want to study *The Many Landfalls of John Cabot* which, according to the publisher, "contrasts what we know about Cabot with what we think we know" and "illustrates how nationalists construct a nation's past by using and sometimes distorting historical events."

And speaking of nationalists, how I wish someone would publish a popular history of Canada, from early New France to the nearly present, in English but written from a sovereigntist perspective. It would no doubt arouse argument, but perhaps – only perhaps, I realize – it would increase understanding.

Books Cited

1867: How the Fathers Made a Deal. By Christopher Moore. McClelland & Stewart. 256 pages. $29.99 hardbound.

British Columbia Place Names, third edition. By G.P.V. and Helen B. Akrigg. University of British Columbia Press. 320 pages. $19.95 paper.

First Across the Continent: Sir Alexander Mackenzie. By Barry Gough. McClelland & Stewart. 240 pages. $29.99 hardbound.

From Summit to Sea: An Illustrated History of Railroads in British Columbia and Alberta. By George Buck. Fifth House. 192 pages. $29.95 hardbound.

Gully Farm: A Story of Homesteading on the Canadian Prairies. By Mary Hiemstra. Fifth House. 324 pages. $12.95 paper.

The Illustrated History of Canada. Edited by Craig Brown. Lester. $24.95 paper.

The Many Landfalls of John Cabot. By Peter E. Pope. University of Toronto Press. 208 pages. $50.00 hardbound; $17.95 paper.

Mrs. King: The Life and Times of Isabel Mackenzie King. By Charlotte Gray. Viking Books. 352 pages. $32.99 hardbound.

The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas. By Olive P. Dickason. University of Alberta Press. 416 pages. $24.95 paper.

Ontario Place Names. By David E. Scott. Lone Pine Press. 256 pages. $14.95 paper.

Place Names of Ontario. By Alan Rayburn. University of Toronto Press. 404 pages. $55.00 hardbound; $21.95 paper.

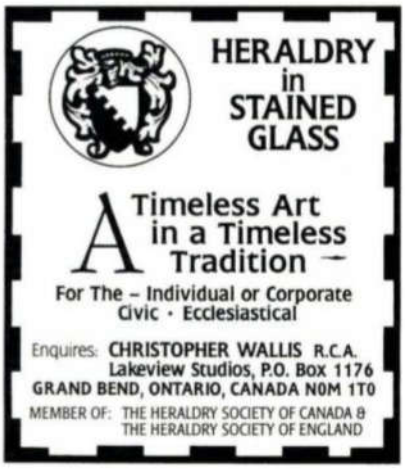
The People of New France. By Allan Greer. University of Toronto Press. 130 pages. $45.00 hardbound; $12.95 paper.

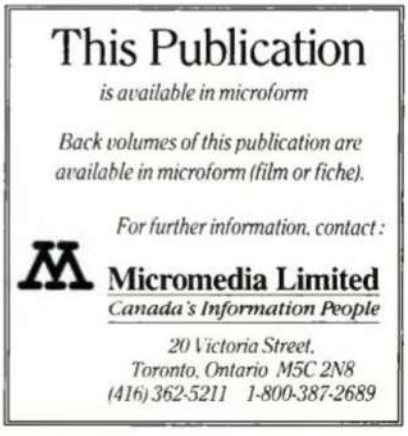
A Short History of Canada. By Desmond Morton. McClelland & Stewart. 348 pages. $19.95 paper.

Shooting Cowboys: Photographing Canadian Cowboy Culture 1878-1965. By Brock V. Silversides. Fifth House. 192 pages. $29.95 hardbound.

Welcome Home: Travels in Smalltown Canada. By Stuart McLean. Penguin Books. 496 pages. $18.99 paper.

What's in a Name: The Story Behind Saskatchewan Place Names. By E.T. Russell. Fifth House. 350 pages. $14.95 paper.





Losing Our Heritage

Upon reading Richard Carver's article on the damage done to the National Archives and National Library ("The National Heritage – A Crumbling Warehouse?" – June/July 1997, p. 39) I feel both comforted and dispirited. He quotes Michael Swift, Assistant National Archivist (ret.), "There is no understanding in government of the seriousness of preserving the record of government", and adds that no one cares about its preservation except historians and genealogists.

It was comforting to read that our Dominion colleagues have the same problems we do at the municipal level. It was for the same reason dispiriting: if the National Archives cannot convince its Minister and Ministry of the standing value of the nation's records, what hope have we at the local level?

It is not a cynical knock against politicians but a sociological observation that, for most of them, long-term thinking extends to the next election. Consequently, education and out-reach programs must focus on permanent value of selected records. These records are the evidence of a constituency's existence and rights, how it came to be and why it is the way it is. Without its records, a constituency has corporate amnesia, and cannot defend itself, and its citizens are the poorer.

Notice that this argument in support of governmental archives makes no appeal to heritage. The value of heritage does not wash with most politicians because they and their supporters do not understand what is going on. The argument is from sheer prudence. The trick now is to get the politicians' and officials' attention long enough to realize that the longer archival resources go without protection the greater the risk to their owners' interests.

Comments and collegial advice are welcome at email:

cntyplan@saturn.execulink.com.

Let's work on this together.

Doug Rozell
Chair, Municipal Archives Interest Group,
Archives Association of Ontario,
P.O. Box 237,
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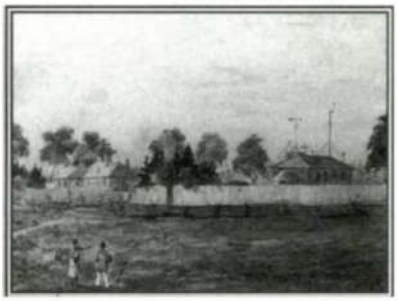
NEW PUBLICATION

Land of Promise, Promised Land:
The Culture of Victorian Science in Canada

Suzanne Zeller



Canada's National History Society and the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) are pleased to announce the publication of Historical Booklet #56: *Land of Promise, Promised Land: The Culture of Victorian Science in Canada,* by Suzanne Zeller. As the latest addition to the Historical Booklet Series, the work examines how Canadians in the second half of the 19th century viewed their physical surroundings and developed responses to it. Zeller studies how the Victorian cultural experience, including the influence of Darwinism, shaped Canadians' understanding of their environment. Suzanne Zeller is the author of *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation.*

The Canadian Historical Association (CHA), publishes a series of booklets to provide the general reader, the teacher and the historical specialist with concise accounts of specific historical problems in the history of Canada. They are available in English or French at $4.25 per booklet, or $3.70 per copy for orders of ten copies or more, postage and taxes included. A complete set of the booklets (all 56 titles) is available at $50. Postage and taxes extra. Cheques or money orders should be made payable to the Association.

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Date Wanted

I have an undated map of "West Canada" (in today's language Southern Ontario) which calls the present-day city of Ottawa "Bytown" and prints that name in the same typeface as Hull opposite. South of a line from "Bytown" to Port Franks on Gratiots Bay (southern Lake Huron) the land is divided into rectangles with English names; north of that line only indigenous names, with the odd "Old Trading Post" are to be seen. Toronto is no longer called York. London, reassuringly, is in Middlesex and on the R. Thames. The printer is J&F Tallis, London, Edinburgh and Dublin. Can any of your readers date this map?

Edgar Locke,
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Nurses Omitted

Your article "Medals For the Volunteers" by Hugh A. Halliday in the June/July issue of *The Beaver* mentions the numbers of participants who were awarded the medal. It did not mention that 12 Canadian nurses had been awarded the campaign medal "North West 1885 Canada". It was the first time in Canada that female nurses had been recognized as forming part of a military force in the field.

In fact, it was an historic event because this action resulted in Canadian nurses becoming officers in the Canadian medical branch before their counterparts in Great Britain or the United States. It is mentioned in the book I edited, *The Military Nurses of Canada*. The article was written by a Manitoba nurse, Carolyn (McIntyre) Jones, a 1969 graduate of Grace Hospital of Nursing, Winnipeg.

Edith (Landells) Lees,
Editor, Publication of
The Military Nurses of Canada,
Richmond, BC.

Nature Still Intact

I read with interest the Guest Column in your April/May issue by Clarence Tillenius in which he reviews Karen Wonders' book on *Habitat Dioramas*.

I was very surprised to read the quotation which states: "The Royal British Columbia Museum, to cite only one example, no longer has any of the groups of native mammals and birds in environmental settings which were once described as exceptional." I can assure your readers that the Museum in Victoria still has an extensive area in which native animals and plants are displayed in their natural environmental settings which include rain forest, wetlands and seashore. These settings are still, in my opinion, exceptional in that in some of the areas the lighting is dimmed from time to time to show how that environment appears during the darker hours of the day.

K. Eric Marshall,
Cowichan Bay, BC.

The Beaver

December 1997 / January 1998

A LETTER TO ANTOINE

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Bruce Russell describes John Singer Sargent's camping trip to the beautiful and impressive landscape of Lake Louise and Lake O'Hara. Sargent's paintings are known throughout the world, especially his "supreme picture" of Lake O'Hara.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KANAKAS?

Jean Barman tells about the arrival of the colourful Kanakas, a Polynesian word meaning people, on the North Pacific Coast and the integration of these Hawaiians into Canadian life.

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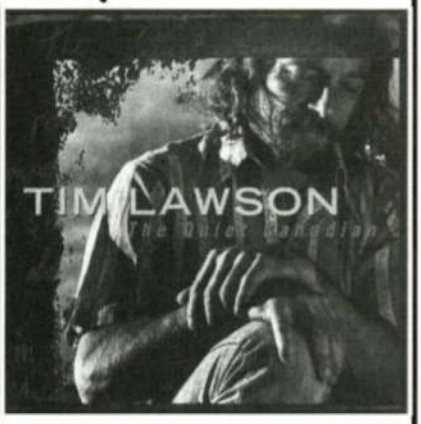
Frederick McEvoy describes Monk as a religious zealot and proponent of Zionism and world peace. In order to prepare for the coming millennium there had to be a reconciliation. Shuttling between Ottawa, London and Jerusalem he enlisted the assistance of such prominent people as John Ruskin. His impractical dreams ended with his death in Ottawa in 1896.

***Plus... Christopher Moore** on history and historians, ...**Chris Raible** ... **Pictures from Canadian Attics** and **History in the News** ... with reviews, letters and opinion.*

TIM LAWSON

"This record is dedicated to **Sir William Stephenson**, "The Man Called Intrepid". I had the honour of meeting him. He was a Canadian hero, the smartest man I ever met and a real inspiration to me."
Tim Lawson

The Quiet Canadian



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In mid-June of this year, the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature in Winnipeg opened its second exhibition featuring the Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection. More than 500 selected artifacts from this exceptional collection are on display until 18 January 1998.

The Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection is among the most extensive private historical resources ever maintained by one of the oldest, still-active merchandising companies in the world. The Collection, donated in 1994, portrays over three centuries of the Company's colourful history. A new gallery to house the vast Collection is now under construction and is expected to open in 1999.

This exhibition is exempt from Canada's National History Society's admission discount program with the museum.

VOYAGEURS' ROUTE

The Alexander Mackenzie Voyageur Route Association (AMVRA) links the historic route between the old Port of Quebec and Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, via the original route of the North West Company and thence the Alexander Mackenzie 1792/93 overland to the Pacific Ocean. In 1995, on Heritage Day, the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien, issued the official federal proclamation confirming the existence of the "Sea to Sea" route and the reasons Canadians should celebrate and protect this heritage. Honorary patrons are: John Fraser, Peter C. Newman, Lewis W. MacKenzie, Pierre Berton, and Senator Ray Perrault.

For additional information on the AMVRA and membership fees write to P.O. Box 425, Station A, Kelowna, BC, Canada V1Y 7P1.
Tel. (250) 762-3002 Fax (250) 868-8398.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The Dominion Institute's Youth and History Project received considerable public attention. The centrepiece of the project was an Angus Reid survey that asked a sample of 1,100 youth from across the country 30 basic questions on Canadian history. The average score on the survey was 36% and only 16% of young Canadians received a passing grade. The survey results indicate that youth lack much of the basic knowledge necessary to participate in society as responsible and informed citizens.

One recommendation the Institute is making is for the Department of Heritage to develop, in co-operation with the Council of Ministers of Education, a national history framework of basic names and dates that could be incorporated into provincial history curricula. It is believed that the framework initiative could make a significant contribution to national unity by insuring that young Canadians share a basic understanding of the country's history.

CABOT ON CD-ROM

From his sailing ship the *Matthew* to a newly released multimedia CD-Rom bearing his name rather neatly summarizes the distance travelled by John Cabot since 1497, the year of his landfall in North America. In conjunction with the 500th anniversary of Cabot's arrival, Media Touch Technologies, of St. John's, NF, has unveiled *Cabot: The Discovery of the New World*, a CD-Rom about Cabot's life and times. It "combines rich interactive multimedia with role-playing game technology, allowing users to explore content focussing on Cabot's life, his technology and world." This is an educational resource for teachers and students. For further information, contact Media Touch at:
P.O. Box 1952, St. John's, NF A1C 5P3.
Phone 709-753-8252/fax 709-753-8262
email: ppenney@mediatouch.com.

MUSEUM PROFILE

THE NEW BRUNSWICK MUSEUM (NBM) galleries relocated to Market Square, a retail area in Saint John, were officially opened on 28 April 1996 by H.R.H. Prince Charles. Over 70,000 visitors toured the "new" NBM in this city-centre location during its first year of operations.

The NBM at Market Square offers visitors the opportunity to see an extensive humanities and natural sciences collection as well as many travelling exhibits. With 62,000 square feet of display space, much of the collection that was in storage is now on exhibit. New gallery designs, interactive components and active programming provide visitors unique museum experiences. Journey through the History Gallery from its lumber camps to the urban, rural and industrial developments of the province.

"Delilah" is the centrepiece of the *Hall of the Great Whales*. The 45-foot Northern Right Whale skeleton weighing over one ton is suspended from the ceiling. Beside this skeleton is a life-size model of Delilah.

Our Changing Earth Geology Gallery follows the evolution of the earth in geological time periods. Its special design includes fossil imprints embedded in the floor.

Three Fine Art Galleries, featuring New Brunswick, Canadian and International Art, a Decorative Arts Gallery and a Family Discovery Gallery/Television Studio occupy

The model of Delilah in the Hall of the Great Whales.

the third floor of the Museum. Opening in 1997 is the Fundy Tidal Tube, an exhibit demonstrating the power and size of the Bay of Fundy tides. The water level in this three-story glass tube rises and falls in synchronization with the tides, the highest in the world.

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- McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal
- Pointe à Callière, Musée d'archéologie et d'histoire de Montréal
- Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec
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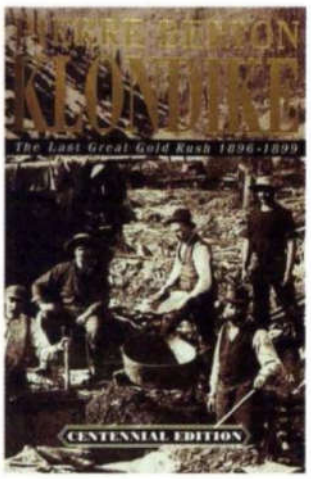

KLONDIKE
by Pierre Berton

Winner of the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction when first published in 1958, this bestselling classic, newly reissued, is essential reading about a colourful period in Canadian history now celebrating its centennial anniversary. 472 pp. Index. Publisher's List Price $21; Club Price **$15.** (paper)

To order see The Beaver Book Club ad in this issue.

Pictures from Canadian Attics

A Steam Engine in Trouble

This photograph depicts a steam engine, which was too heavy for the small bridge. It was submitted by Adrian K. Paton, who owns the South Saskatchewan Museum at Arcola, Saskatchewan. The photograph was given to the museum by a grandson of Thomas Stephenson. Mr. Stephenson, who was born in 1858, came to Western Canada from Ontario. He was the agent for John Deere Company in Arcola and served as Mayor for a number of years. It is believed that the steam engine belonged to Thomas Stephenson's father. The photograph was taken by A.E. Cantelon of Dutton, Ontario.

Canadian attics and family photograph albums contain many forgotten treasures of times past. Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or fascinatingly ordinary, in the long history of our country? If you have an old family photograph that you think might help to fill in the picture of Canada's past, have it copied at your local photo shop and send it to **The Beaver, "Pictures from Canadian Attics", #478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B OT6**. Include a brief description of the picture with its date and location. Identify people in the picture, if possible. We will publish the best entries and provide a fee of $25 for every photo used. Remember, don't send the priceless original. Have an inexpensive copy made at your local camera shop, pack it carefully and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want it returned.

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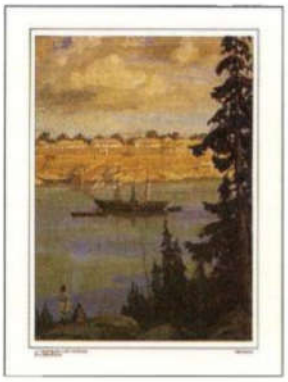

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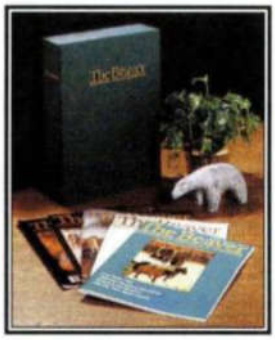

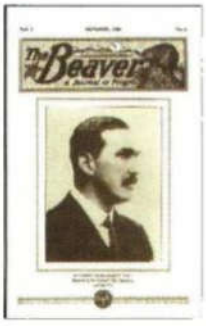

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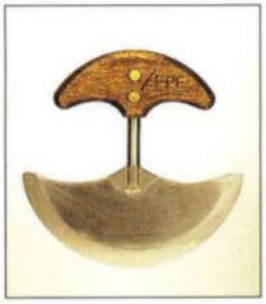

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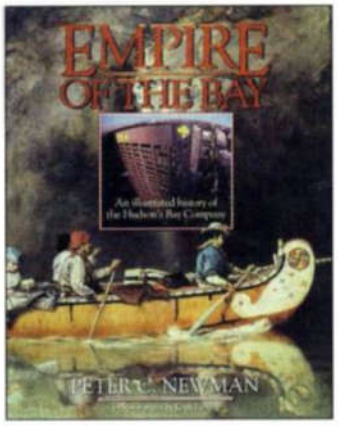

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Christopher Moore

The Revolutionaries of Green Gables

Did Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert have a secret past as social revolutionaries?

When Anne Shirley came to Green Gables – it would have been in the 1880s – the nearest thing to a political issue seemed to be who would sit with the minister's wife at the picnic. Formal politics were patriotic and deferential. Hearing a speech by Prime Minister John A. Macdonald made Marilla Cuthbert feel proud and "to vote Conservative was part of Matthew's religion."

But Marilla and Matthew had been young once. In their youth, in the 1860s, polite and dutiful Prince Edward Islanders were aflame with resistance to constituted authority and had risen up against long-established laws and property rights. They disavowed their debts, confronted bailiffs. They defied the courts and faced down the army. This moment of social ferment and direct action, deeply buried almost as soon as it was over, is explored in a remarkable new book, *The Tenant League of Prince Edward Island* by Ian Ross Robertson. When I raised a possible influence of that upheaval upon the world evoked in *Anne of Green Gables*, Robertson did not laugh. "That part of western Queen's County was a hotbed of Tenant League activity," he said thoughtfully.

The Tenant League's brief career (it was simultaneous with the making of confederation: 1864–67) was, in Robertson's words, "an extra-parliamentary movement for radical change, willing to resort to civil disobedience and to defy the law." Despite being illegal, and potentially violent and dangerous, this movement enjoyed overwhelming support among Islanders. It "would be exceptionally successful," reports Robertson. Indeed, it would change the Island forever.

The origins of the Tenant League crisis of the 1860s had grown from an insanity in British imperial expansion. With vast tracts of land available for settlement in North America, colonists were rarely willing to become tenants without very strong incentives. Yet in 1767 Britain divided Prince Edward Island, newly acquired from France, into sixty-seven large lots and gave them all to wealthy or favoured Englishmen. As a result, the Island became one of the few places north of feudal Mexico where free citizens would be unable to own their own land. Potential settlers, like the refugee loyalists of 1783, mostly shunned the Island. The poor Irish and Scots eventually recruited there had to pay rent to great landlords, most of whom continued to live in Britain, spending their money to maintain a gentlemanly way of life and returning nothing to the Island or its people.

This system came abruptly to an end in the 1860s. Suddenly the vulnerable tenant families of the Island transformed themselves into securely-established property-owners like other Canadians. Such a change, one might think, ought to be momentous in Island history and in Island folk memory. Yet, writes Robertson, it "has not received even token mention in scholarly histories," let alone in stories and folklore. Robertson is on to a remarkable subject, and he has written a remarkable book.

The central image of the *Tenant League* is the sound of tin trumpets echoing from a crossroad in a rural Island neighbourhood, where virtually everyone has begun to defy the landlord's rent-collectors. The horns attract crowds of farmers, the women among them as active as the men. In the name of the Tenant League, they confront and drive back to Charlottetown some hapless bailiff who has been dispatched to punish their defiance by enforcing payment or by seizing someone's farm. There is a nice restraint to these confrontations. A few people take whacks to the head, but no one is killed. But the rejection of legal authority is open, public, and nearly unanimous.

Facing such a crisis, the British empire had a standard policy: dispatch a gunboat. Usually a regiment of troops sufficed to crush such defiance by torching some homes and hanging or jailing a few ringleaders. Indeed, troops were sent to Prince Edward Island in 1865. Yet the dissidents faced them down. The great landlords lost their nerve, despite their position in law and despite the authority behind them – British Prime Minister Palmerston himself had condemned the Island unrest. Instead of having the dissidents smashed in the name of the law and the sacred rights of property, the landlords began to sell their lands to the triumphant rent-strikers. A few years later, with confederation achieved, Ottawa would make such sales mandatory, but by then the landlord system was already in collapse on the Island.

This sudden revolution would seem to be a great and triumphant moment in Island and Canadian history. Why then is it forgotten? From his microscopic study of how the agitation worked, Robertson thinks he understands. "It often seemed," he told me recently, "that the most prosperous – the would-be most conservative – farm families were the most frustrated with their tenancy, their insecurity of tenure, their inability to buy."

The landlords had a problem, Robertson explained. If they sold to the best, most prosperous tenants, they were left with only the penniless losers and non-payers. Even as their rental income declined, the costs of collecting rents would grow. So landlords refused to sell even to tenants with the means to own land. These tenants often became pillars of the Tenant League – but they did not want to be rebels. They just wanted to be let into the system to enjoy the protection of the law and the rights of property, the way

their counterparts did everywhere else in North America.

"After it was over," continued Robertson of these Islanders, "they probably wanted to put it behind them. They had taken drastic measures because they had tried everything else, but they did it with a sense that they should not have been driven to such ends." Since Islanders had always felt like the real owners of their farms, anyway, Island memory quickly glossed over their brief (yet highly effective) careers as rebels and lawbreakers – particularly in prosperous communities like those that inspired Lucy Maud Montgomery.

Robertson, who has now recovered this history, is himself an Islander, whose career has its own parallels to Maud Montgomery's. He was no orphan, but he lost his father a few years after he was born in 1944, and his mother took him from the farm to Charlottetown, where she could teach. "It was only about seven miles, but these were dirt roads and unplowed in winter, so you could not commute." There he too rose on his abilities in school. He attended Prince of Wales College, the "Queen's" of the Anne novels. An unusual combination of college and high school, with a notable academic reputation, Prince of Wales secured him a scholarship to McGill. Today Robertson is a professor at the University of Toronto and a specialist in Island and Atlantic Canadian history.

Over twenty years, Robertson assembled the story of the Tenant League from the ground up, estate by estate, from newspapers, court records, land registers, and landlord files, in a careful, methodical reconstruction of a kind now slightly out-of-favour in trendy academic circles. The book scrutinizes many small conflicts and minor heroes. One of them, Charles Dickieson, proves that a radical tradition continues on the island; his grandson was a National Farm Union activist, and his great-grandson, Herb Dickieson, leader of the Island New Democratic Party, now sits in the legislature.

Robertson's Island connects to the rest of the world. He compares its land struggles to those of Ireland and Scotland, though not with Quebec, where the seigneurial regime – another landlord/tenant system – was abolished by law in the 1850s. George-Étienne Cartier, an architect of that abolition, might have understood the Island's problem when he arrived there in 1864 to discuss confederation.

Confederation, however, lies largely outside *The Tenant League*'s story. Noting that confederation histories mostly leave out the Tenant League issue, Robertson gives a Tenant League history that largely leaves out confederation. Yet surely the two were linked and need to be considered together. In 1864 confederation's advocates at first promised a solution to the Island's land issue. Then they reneged, and some of confederation's strongest supporters on the Island immediately rejected the union. Prince Edward Island's opposition to confederation, like its resistance to the new Confederation Bridge, has usually been explained by "island nationalism", pride and self-sufficiency. The Tenant League history, however, makes it seem more likely that confederation simply failed to respond to the Island's most pressing issue: the land issue. Islanders, quite understandably, turned away and got on with solving the issue themselves. In 1873, when the Island finally joined confederation, Canada put up the money that completed the expropriation of the great estates, but Robertson argues that the Tenant League had already broken the system.

The Tenant League of Prince Edward Island may be read by relatively few, even on the Island itself. It is serious, uncompromising, scholarly history from an academic author and an academic press. And the Island is well provided with more accessible samplings of its history. There is *The Island* magazine, a lively local-history quarterly. And "A Long Way From the Road", a nostalgic song-and-story play performed every summer by island historian David Weale, should rank with "Anne" on the Island visitor's must-see list.

In the long run, however, a good book makes history. In the last fifty years, some good historians have produced small books on Island history, and there have been lesser works on some big subjects. *The Tenant League*, however, is both a big subject and a good book. Ian Robertson says the Tenant League "successfully broke the mould" of Island history. His book has done the same for Island historiography.

And just recently, Robertson actually sold an option on his history to Mirvish Productions of Toronto, who see in it an idea for a musical drama. "Anne" may yet merge with "Les Miserables", and the revolutionary secrets of Green Gables may yet become part of Canadian story and song. When I was driving through the Island's charming countrysides on holiday this summer, it was those horn-blowing Leaguers who kept appearing in my mind's eye (and ear).

The Tenant League of Prince Edward Island was published last fall by University of Toronto Press. It recently won an Award of Merit from the Canadian Historical Association.

Christopher Moore's new book *1867: How the Fathers Made a Deal* is published this month by McClelland and Stewart.

In the August/September issue, p.54 Domillo Technical Books was misspelled. It should read: Demille Technical Books.

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THE SOCIETY

Governor General's Award

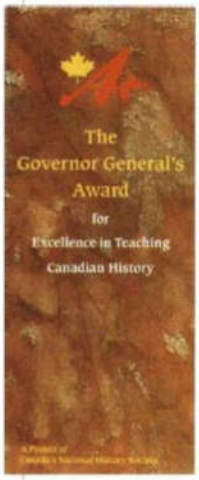
The finalists in the 1996–97 competition for the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History have been announced. They are:

- **Susan Bate**, Rothesay, NB
- **Gordon Blackman**, Pointe Claire, QC
- **Heidi Bohaker**, Mississauga, ON
- **Linda Bulka**, Winnipeg, MB
- **Susan Anderson** & **Susan Earles**, Delta, BC
- **Yann Herry**, Whitehorse, Yukon
- **Donald Holmgren**, Ashmount, AB
- **John Jamieson**, Sanikiluaq, NWT
- **Marc Keirstead**, Newmarket, ON
- **Mario Mimeault**, Rivière-au-Renard, QC
- **Jackie Underhill** and **Kathy Thomson**, Edmonton, AB
- **Indu Varma**, Sackville, NB

The finalists represent a good Canadian cross section, who teach most grades in urban, rural and remote communities. They were selected by a national panel of six bilingual judges from among 111 entries.

Finalists receive an all-expense paid trip for two to Ottawa, once again the site of the Award Ceremony. Each finalist will also receive a certificate and a cash prize of $500. (Group submission members will share the cash prize.) The recipient of the 1997 Award, selected from among the finalists, will receive a medal and a cash prize of $5,000. The recipient's school will receive a computer, with CD-Rom capability, courtesy of **Bell Canada**.

The Award Ceremony will take place 4 October, in Rideau Hall, under the auspices of His Excellency, the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, Governor General of Canada. He will make the presentations and announce the 1997 recipient of the Award.



The Society initiated this program in 1996 to recognize outstanding teachers of Canadian history in the school system. In its inaugural year, the Governor General lent the title of his office to the program. In addition to **Bell Canada**, the program is sponsored in part by **Investors Group**, the **National Capital Commission** and the **Hudson's Bay History Foundation** whose support is much appreciated.

1997 Berton Award Announced

The CRB Foundation, of Montreal, has been selected to receive the 1997 Pierre Berton Award.

The Foundation was established in 1986 by Andrea and Charles Bronfman in part to foster "the enhancement of Canadianism", a goal that has been pursued mainly through an umbrella program known as The Heritage Project. One of its principal components is the well-known and well-received Heritage Minutes. This bilingual series of historical snapshots, 60second "mini-movies", vividly bring to life notable and often little-known people and events from Canada's past. To date 60 minutes have been produced and they are widely seen across Canada on television and in Cineplex-Odeon theatres.

The Heritage Project has many other parts, three of which are of particular note. There is a series of learning resources for schools and the **Heritage Post/Courier du Patrimoine**, a quarterly teachers' magazine on Canadian Heritage themes. Thirdly, there are the Heritage Fairs, now numbering 29 regional and local ones across the country, that encourage students, with involvement and support of local business and community groups, to apply their creative and technological interests to the development of their own exhibits based on a heritage theme.

The Society received 21 nominations for the 1997 Berton Award. While most of the nominees were authors, others included a sculptor, two film makers, a broadcaster, a folk singer and four institutions. It was from among this list of nominees that the CRB Foundation was chosen. The Award will be presented to the Foundation in Toronto in November in recognition of its body of work, but in particular for the Heritage Minutes.

In 1994 the Society established the Pierre Berton Award, to recognize individuals or institutions who have made outstanding contributions to popularizing Canadian history. Pierre Berton was the first recipient of the Award and agreed to have the Award named after him in subsequent years. Other recipients have been James H. Gray of Calgary and Jacques Lacoursière of Quebec City.

Nominations for the 1998 competition are now being accepted up to the closing date of 29 May 1998.

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RED LIGHTS ON THE PRAIRIES *by James H. Gray*
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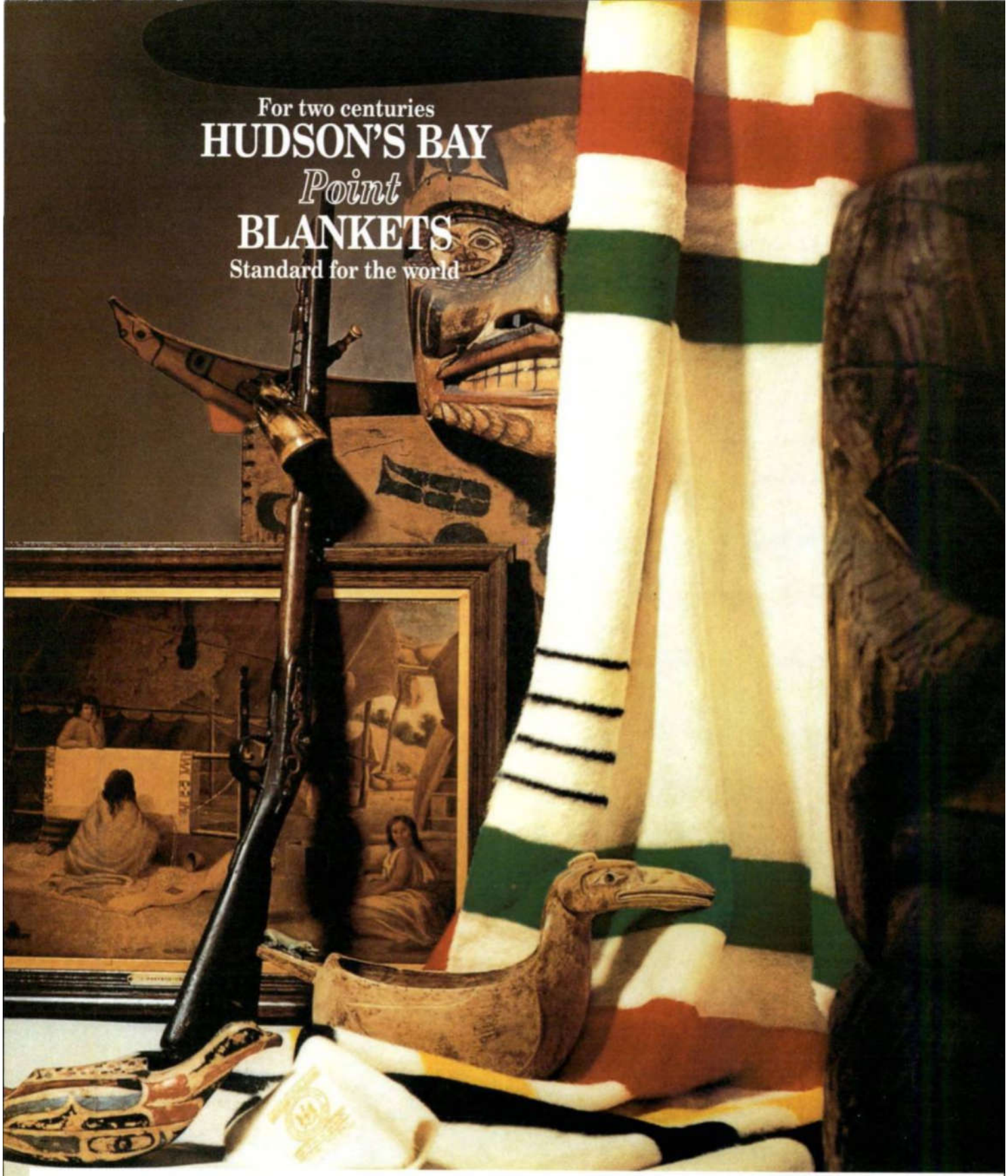

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